viz media

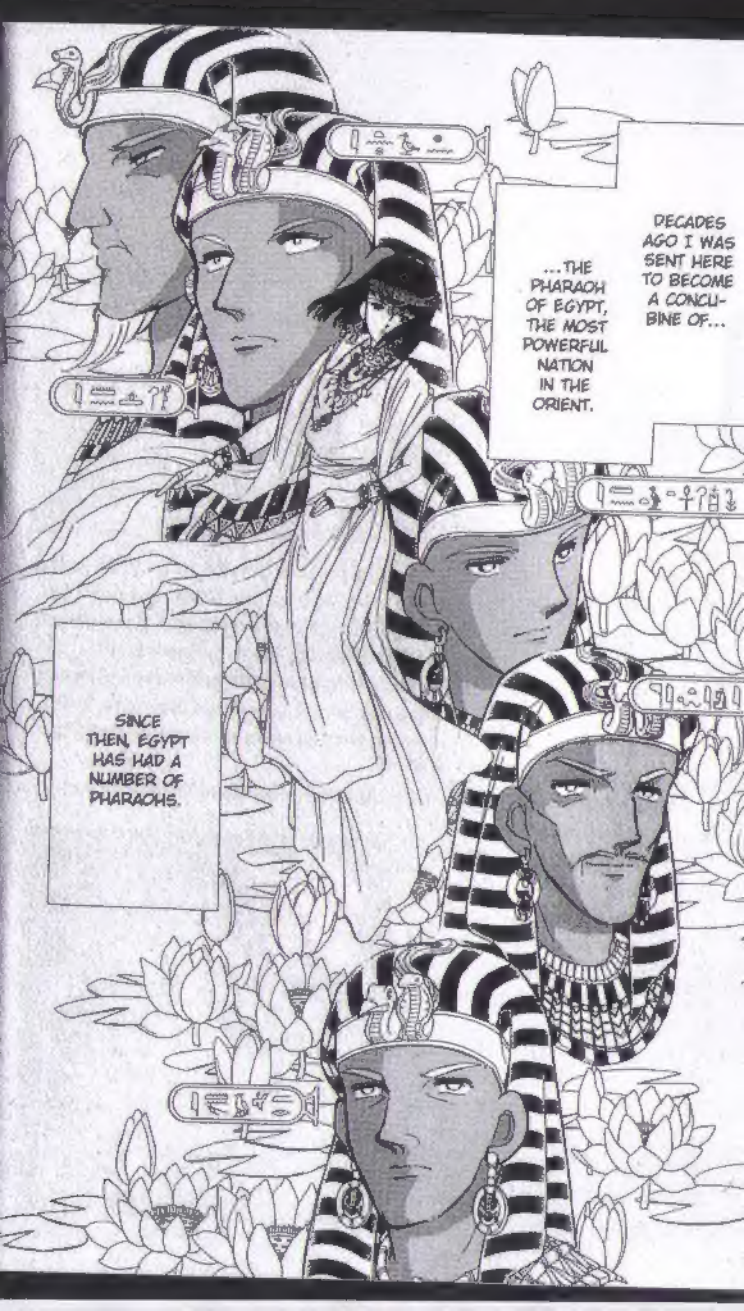
shōjo

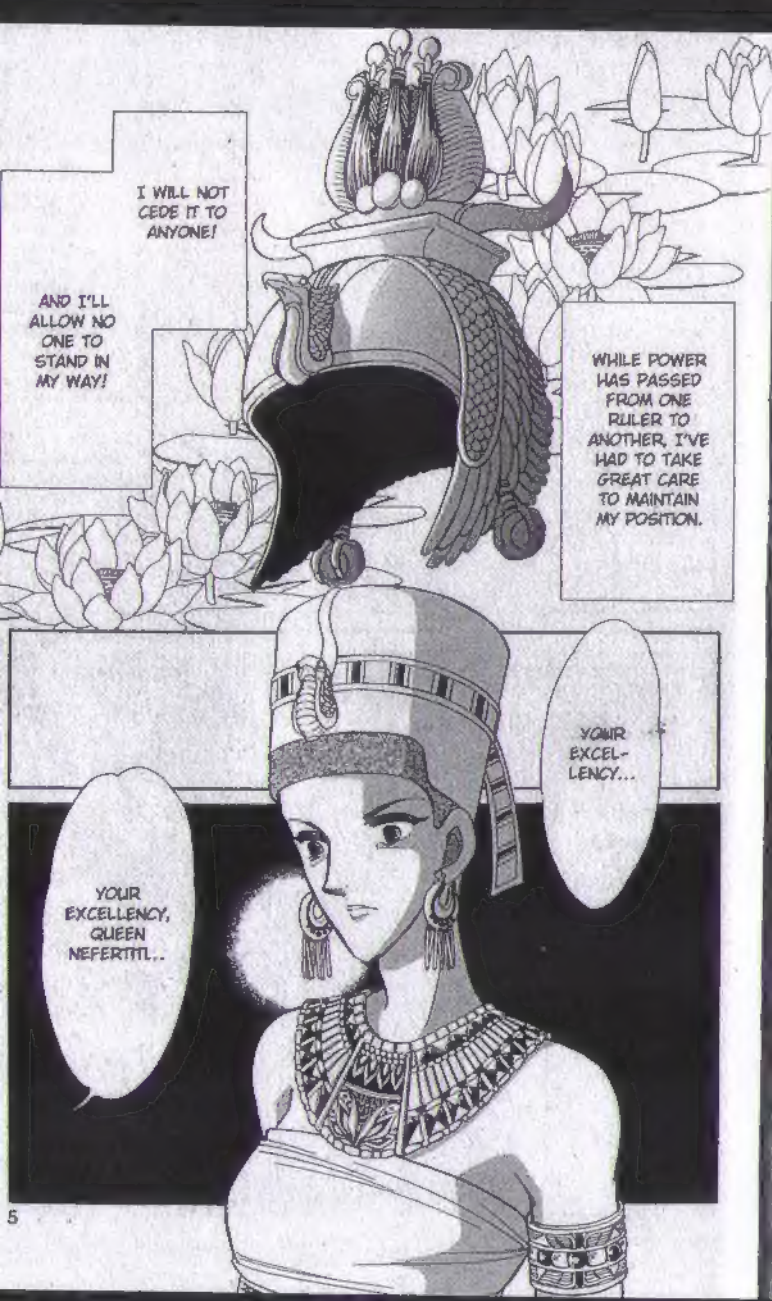
RED RIVER

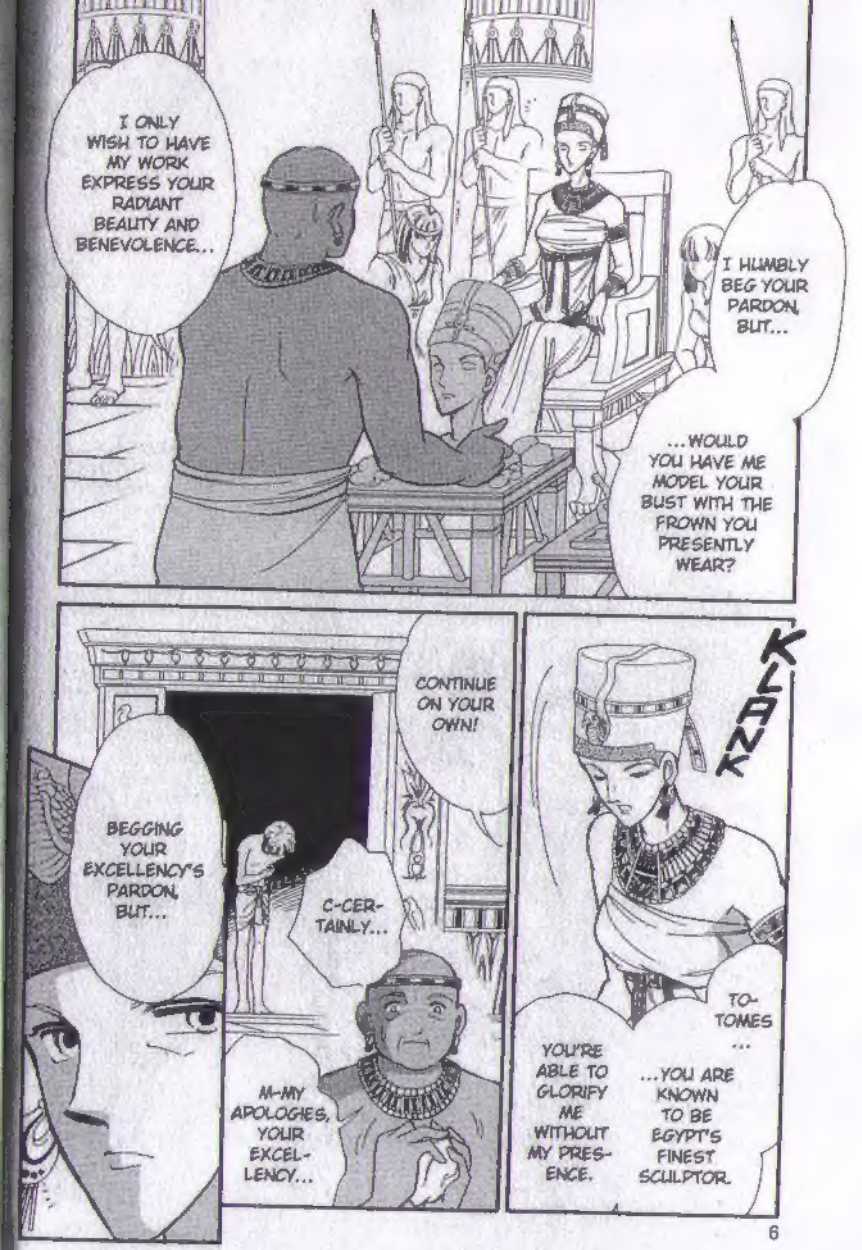
PARENTAL ADVISORY
MATURE CONTENT

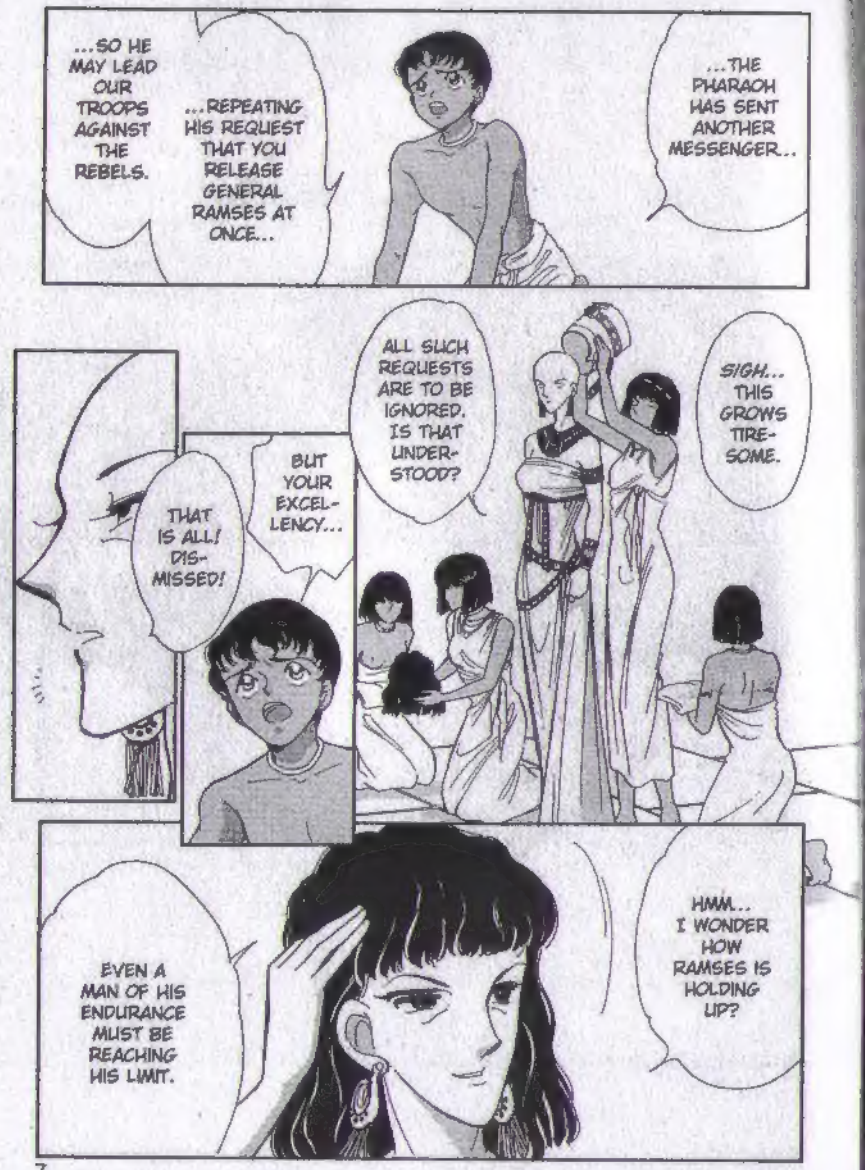
22

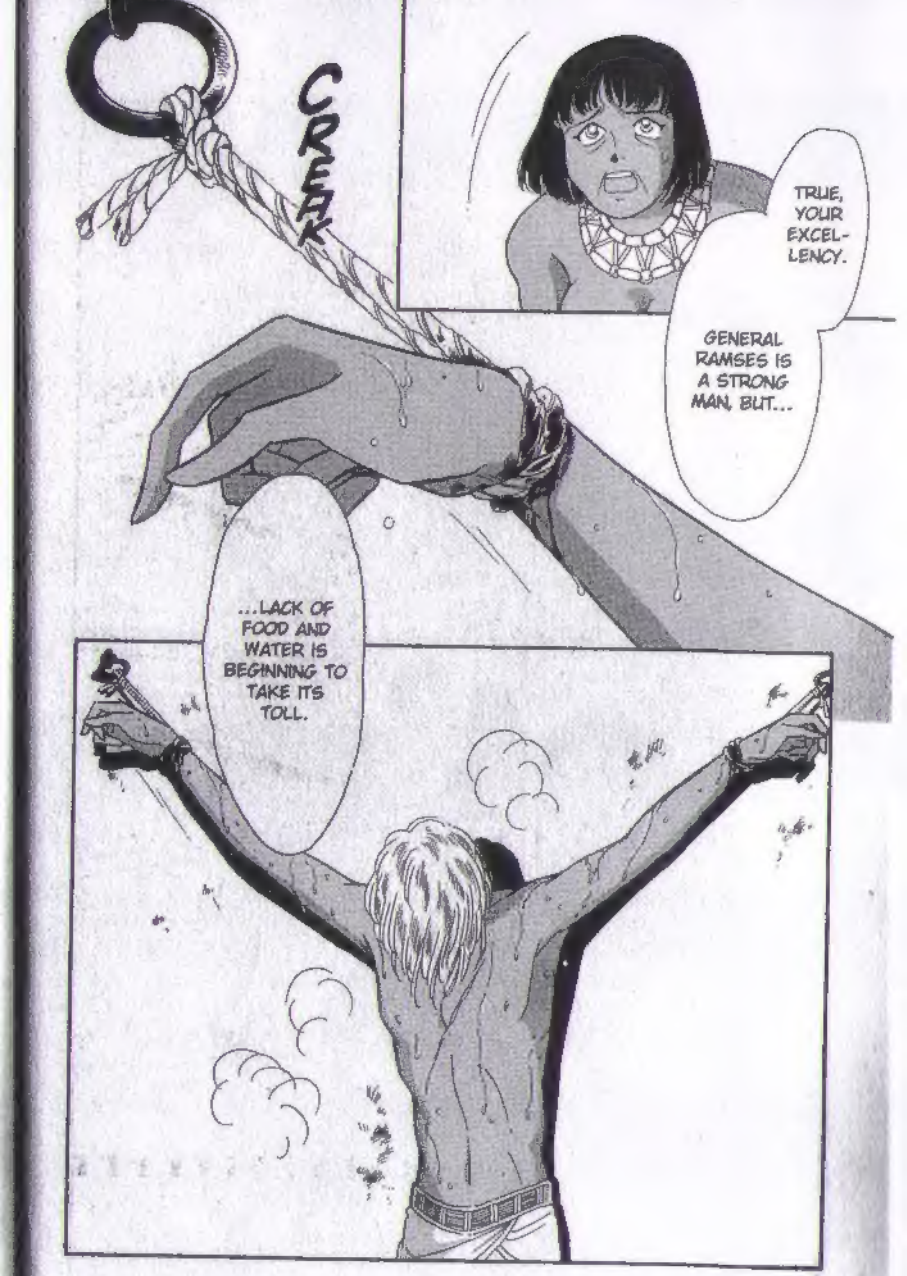
story and art by **Chie Shinohara**


DECADES AGO I WAS SENT HERE TO BECOME A CONCUBINE OF...
...THE PHARAOH OF EGYPT, THE MOST POWERFUL NATION IN THE ORIENT.
SINCE THEN, EGYPT HAS HAD A NUMBER OF PHARAOHS.

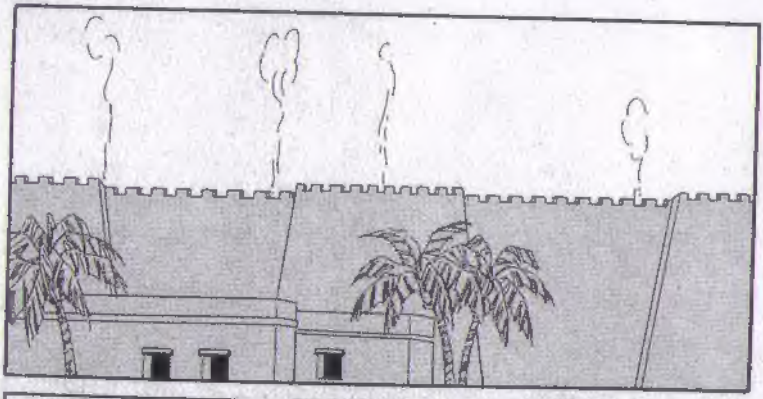

I WILL NOT CEDE IT TO ANYONE!
AND I'LL ALLOW NO ONE TO STAND IN MY WAY!
WHILE POWER HAS PASSED FROM ONE RULER TO ANOTHER, I'VE HAD TO TAKE GREAT CARE TO MAINTAIN MY POSITION.
YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
YOUR EXCELLENCY, QUEEN NEFERTITI..


I ONLY WISH TO HAVE MY WORK EXPRESS YOUR RADIANT BEAUTY AND BENEVOLENCE...
I HUMBLY BEG YOUR PARDON, BUT...
...WOULD YOU HAVE ME MODEL YOUR BUST WITH THE FROWN YOU PRESENTLY WEAR?
KLINK
TO-TOMES...
...YOU ARE KNOWN TO BE EGYPT'S FINEST SCULPTOR.
YOU'RE ABLE TO GLORIFY ME WITHOUT MY PRES-ENCE.
CONTINUE ON YOUR OWN!
C-CER-TAINLY...
M-MY APOLOGIES, YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
BEGGING YOUR EXCELLENCY'S PARDON, BUT...

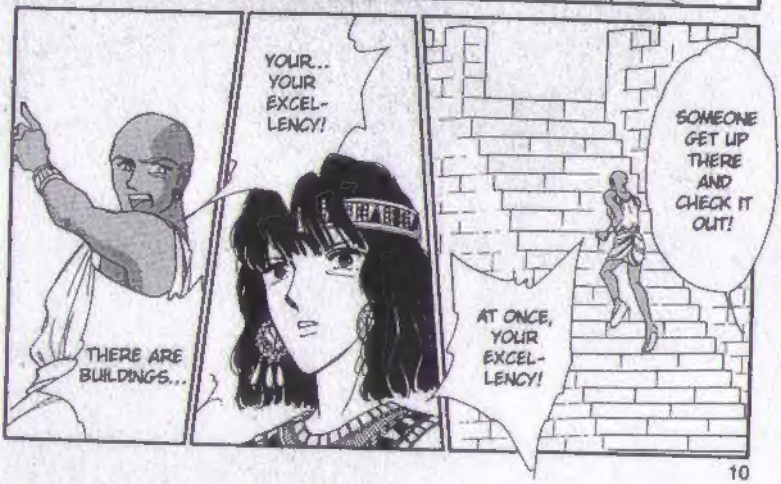

...SO HE MAY LEAD OUR TROOPS AGAINST THE REBELS.
...REPEATING HIS REQUEST THAT YOU RELEASE GENERAL RAMSES AT ONCE...
...THE PHARAOH HAS SENT ANOTHER MESSENGER...
THAT IS ALL! DIS-MISSED!
BUT YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
ALL SUCH REQUESTS ARE TO BE IGNORED. IS THAT UNDER-STOOD?
SIGH... THIS GROWS TIRE-SOME.
EVEN A MAN OF HIS ENDURANCE MUST BE REACHING HIS LIMIT.
HMM... I WONDER HOW RAMSES IS HOLDING UP?


CREAK
TRUE, YOUR EXCEL-LENCY.
GENERAL RAMSES IS A STRONG MAN, BUT...
...LACK OF FOOD AND WATER IS BEGINNING TO TAKE ITS TOLL.

!!
WHEEZE
WHEEZE
GASP



YOUR EXCEL-LENCY!
SMOKE! BEYOND THE WALLS!

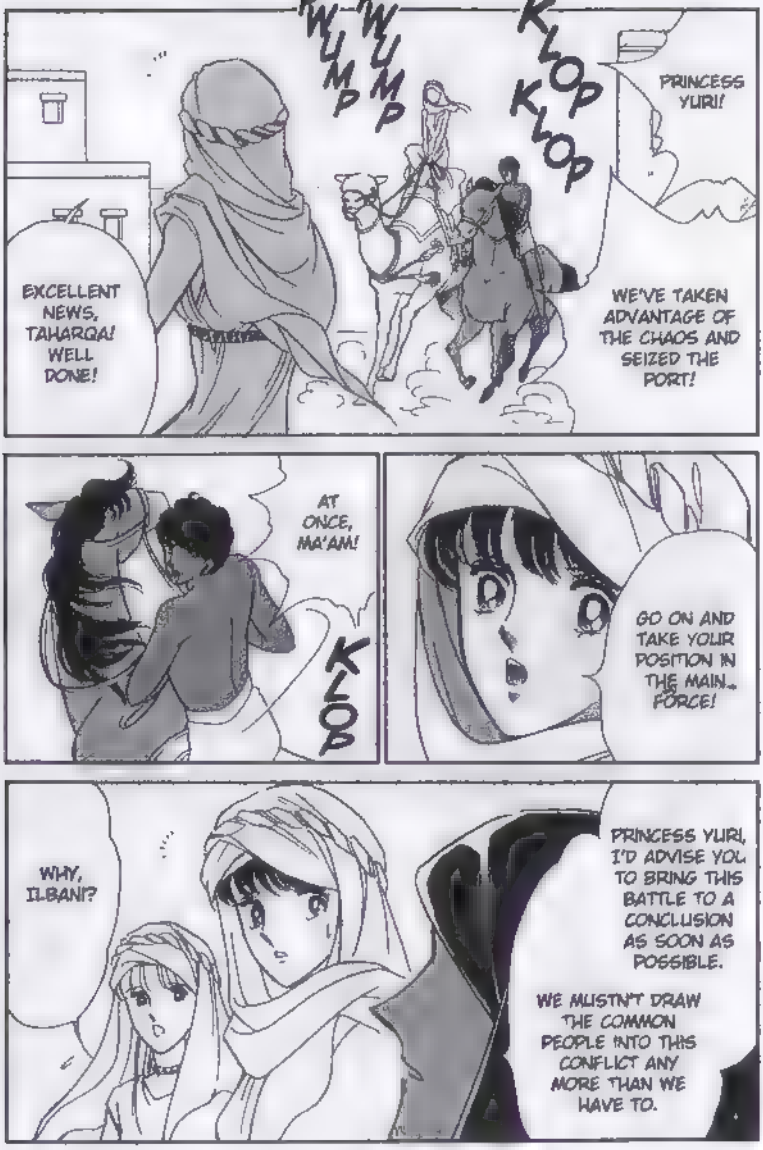

THERE ARE BUILDINGS...
YOUR... YOUR EXCEL-LENCY!
AT ONCE, YOUR EXCEL-LENCY!
SOMEONE GET UP THERE AND CHECK IT OUT!

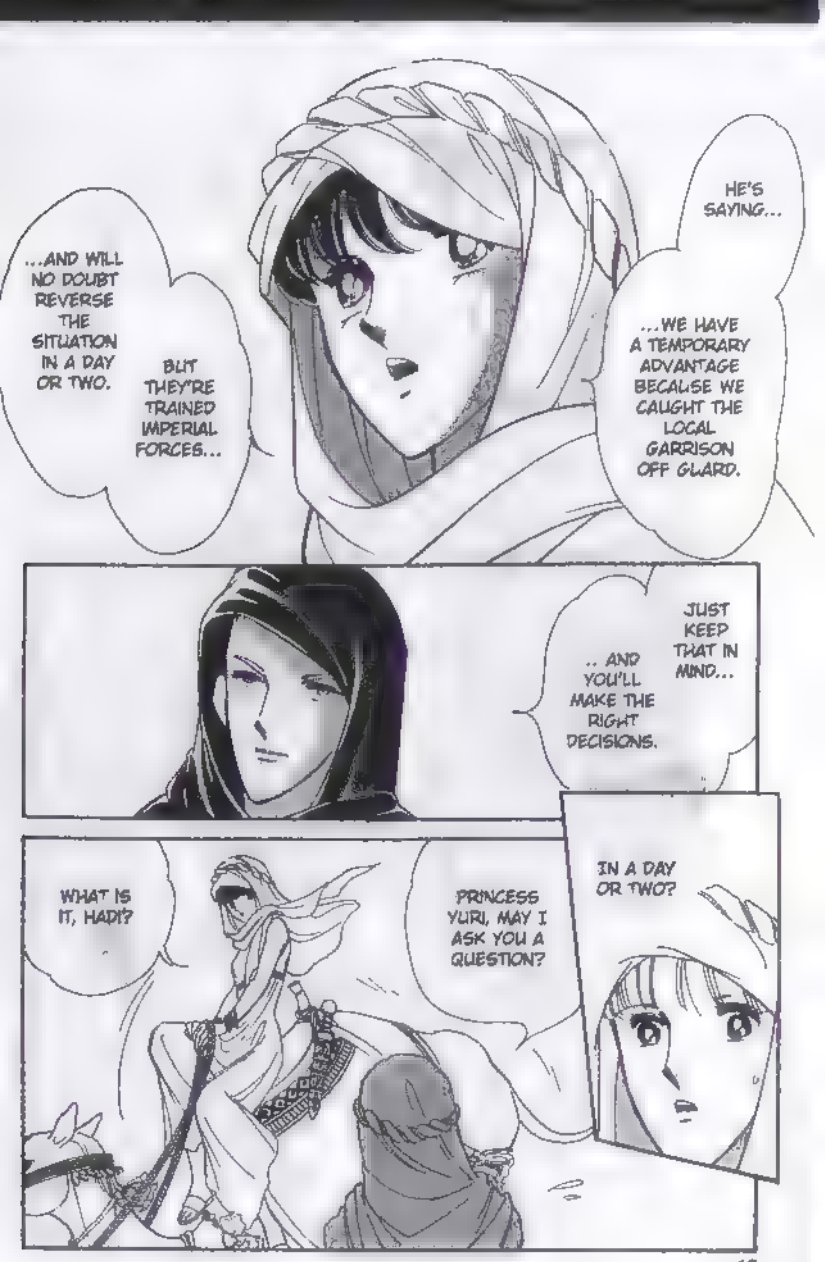
...ON FIRE THROUGH-OUT THEBES!
WHAT ?!

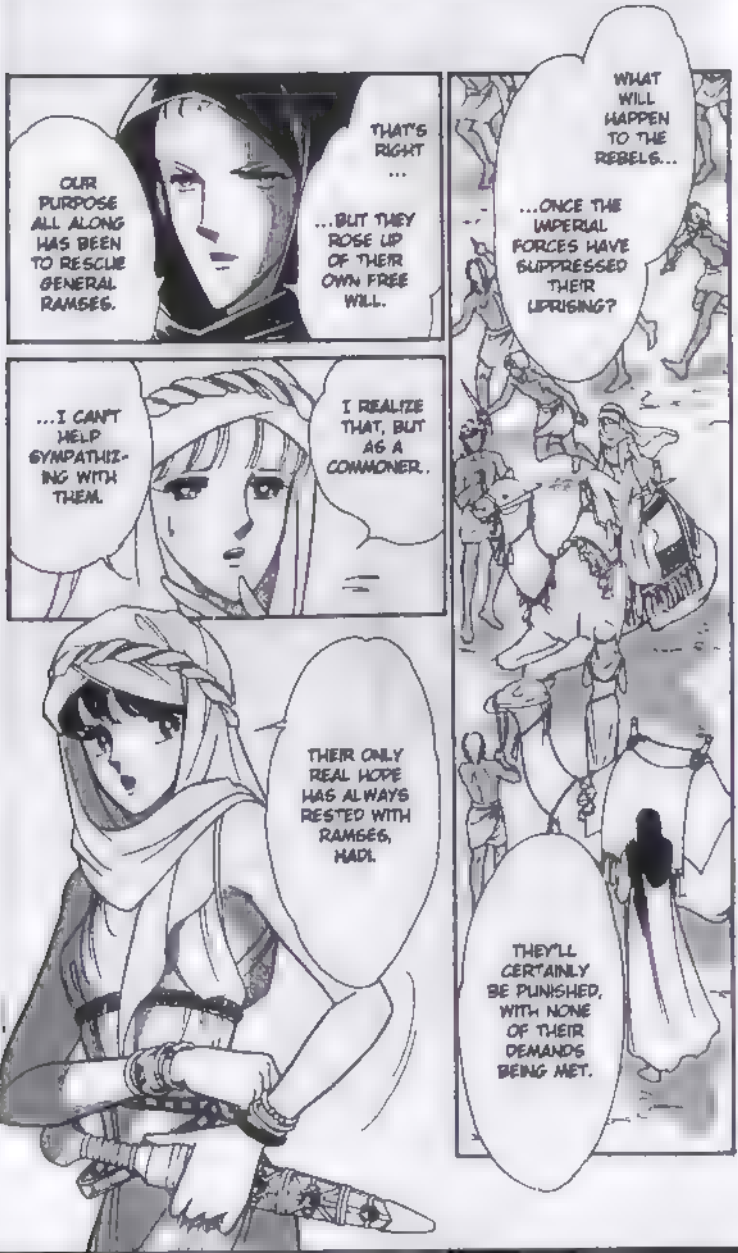
ATTENTION, EVERYONE! THE TIME HAS COME! WE'RE ENTERING THEBES!
RYUI AND SHALA HAVE SET DIVERSIONARY FIRES, SO THE ROUTE TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT SHOULD BE CLEAR!
ROOAAR.
RAAAAAHHH

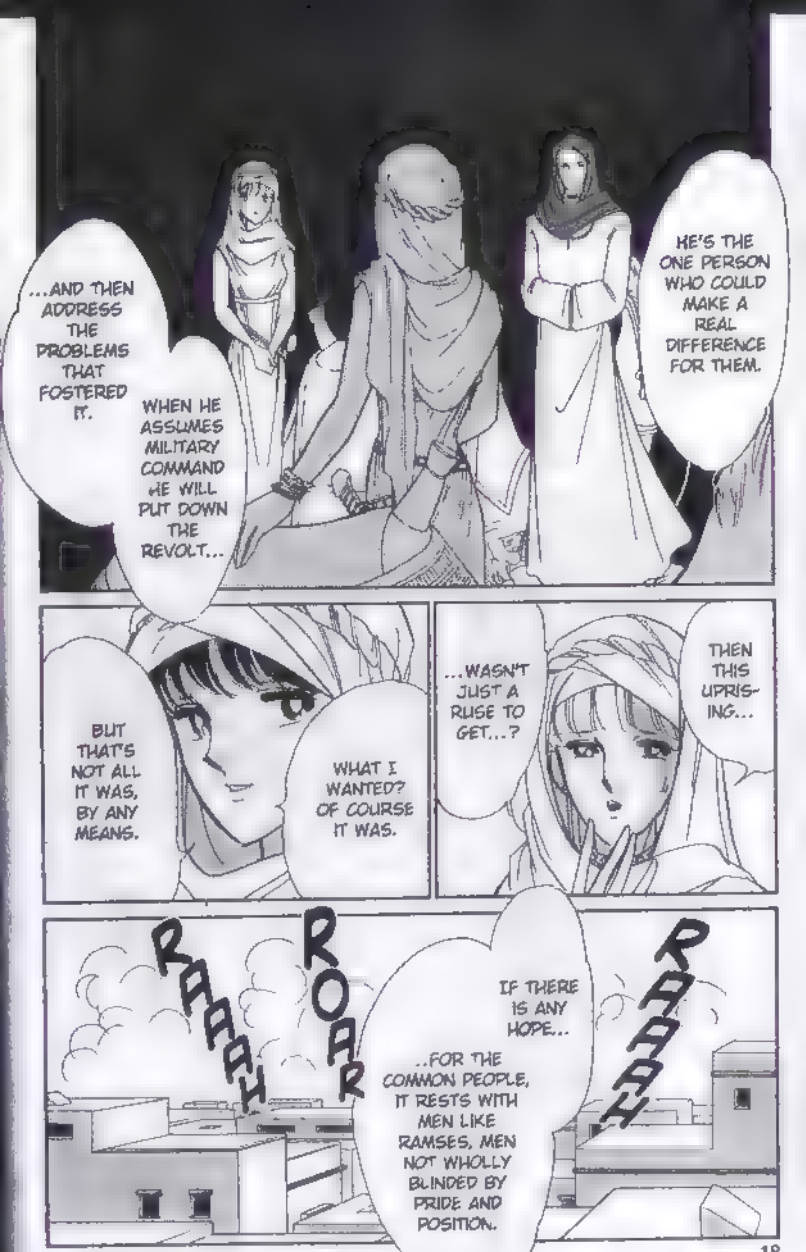
THEY'RE STORMING THE CITY!
REBELS!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
FORGET PROTOCOL!
BEAT THEM BACK BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY!
KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
AAAAAH!

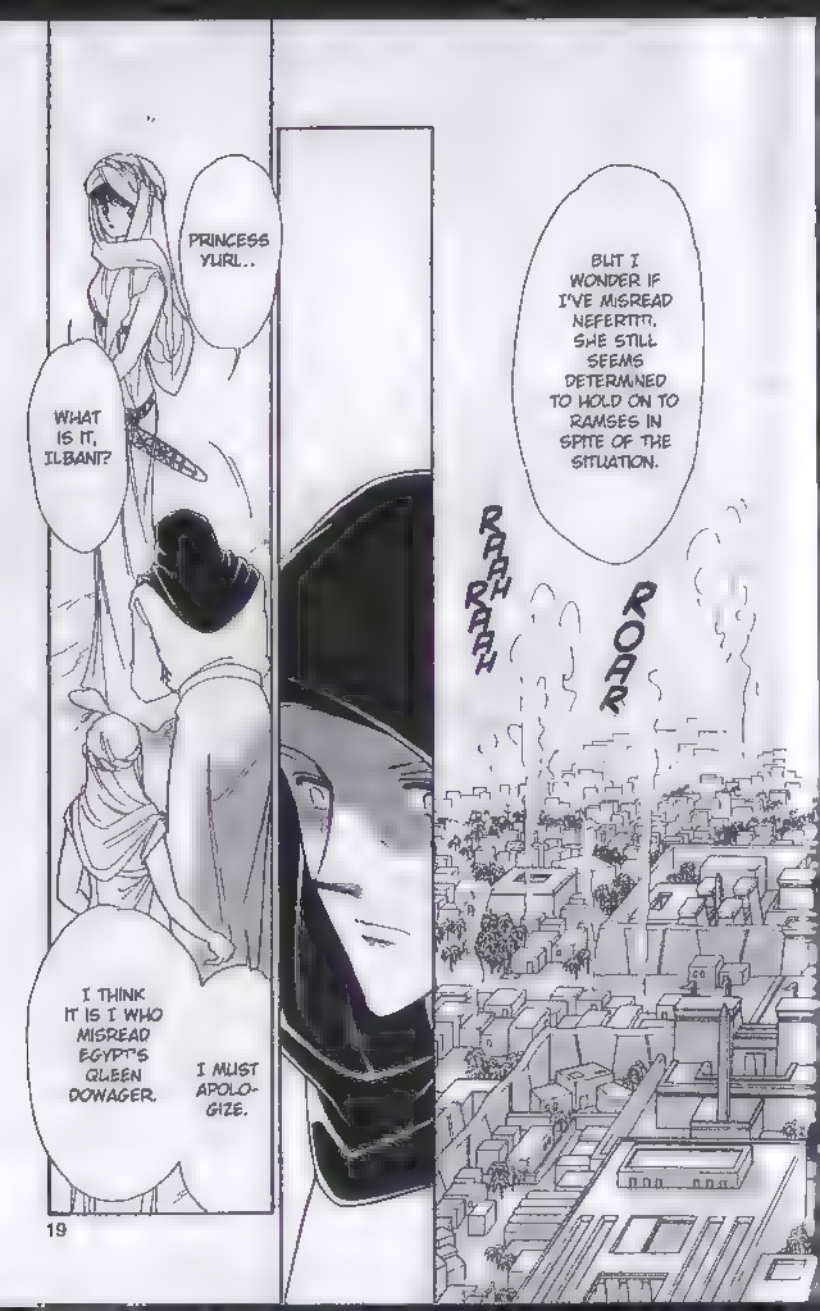
DUNNO... LOOKED LIKE LOCALS TO ME.
WHATTA YOU THINK? REBELS ?
PART OF THE INSUR-GENCY? HALT!
HEY, WHO'RE YOU?!
YEAH! WE KNOW JUST HOW THE REBELS FROM ELEPHANTINE FEEL!
.FEAST EVERY NIGHT WHILE OUR CHILDREN STARVE!
LET 'EM THINK WHAT THEY LIKE!
ARISTO-CRATS AND PRIESTS..
I KNOW, ILBANI..
IT'S WHAT'S ENABLED A VERY SMALL REBEL FORCE LIKE THIS ONE TO DELIVER A DAMAGING BLOW TO EGYPT'S STATUS QUO.
WHEN THOSE IN POWER START FOCUSING TOO MUCH ON THEIR OWN INTERESTS, THAT'S WHEN EMPIRES START TO DECAY.


PWUMP
PWUMP
KLOP
KLOP
PRINCESS YURI!
WE'VE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE CHAOS AND SEIZED THE PORT!
EXCELLENT NEWS, TAHARQA! WELL DONE!
AT ONCE, MA'AM!
KLOB
GO ON AND TAKE YOUR POSITION IN THE MAIN FORCE!
PRINCESS YURI, I'D ADVISE YOU TO BRING THIS BATTLE TO A CONCLUSION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
WE MUSTN'T DRAW THE COMMON PEOPLE INTO THIS CONFLICT ANY MORE THAN WE HAVE TO.
WHY, ILBANI?


HE'S SAYING...
...WE HAVE A TEMPORARY ADVANTAGE BECAUSE WE CAUGHT THE LOCAL GARRISON OFF GUARD.
BUT THEY'RE TRAINED IMPERIAL FORCES...
...AND WILL NO DOUBT REVERSE THE SITUATION IN A DAY OR TWO.
JUST KEEP THAT IN MIND...
.. AND YOU'LL MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS.
IN A DAY OR TWO?
PRINCESS YURI, MAY I ASK YOU A QUESTION?
WHAT IS IT, HADI?

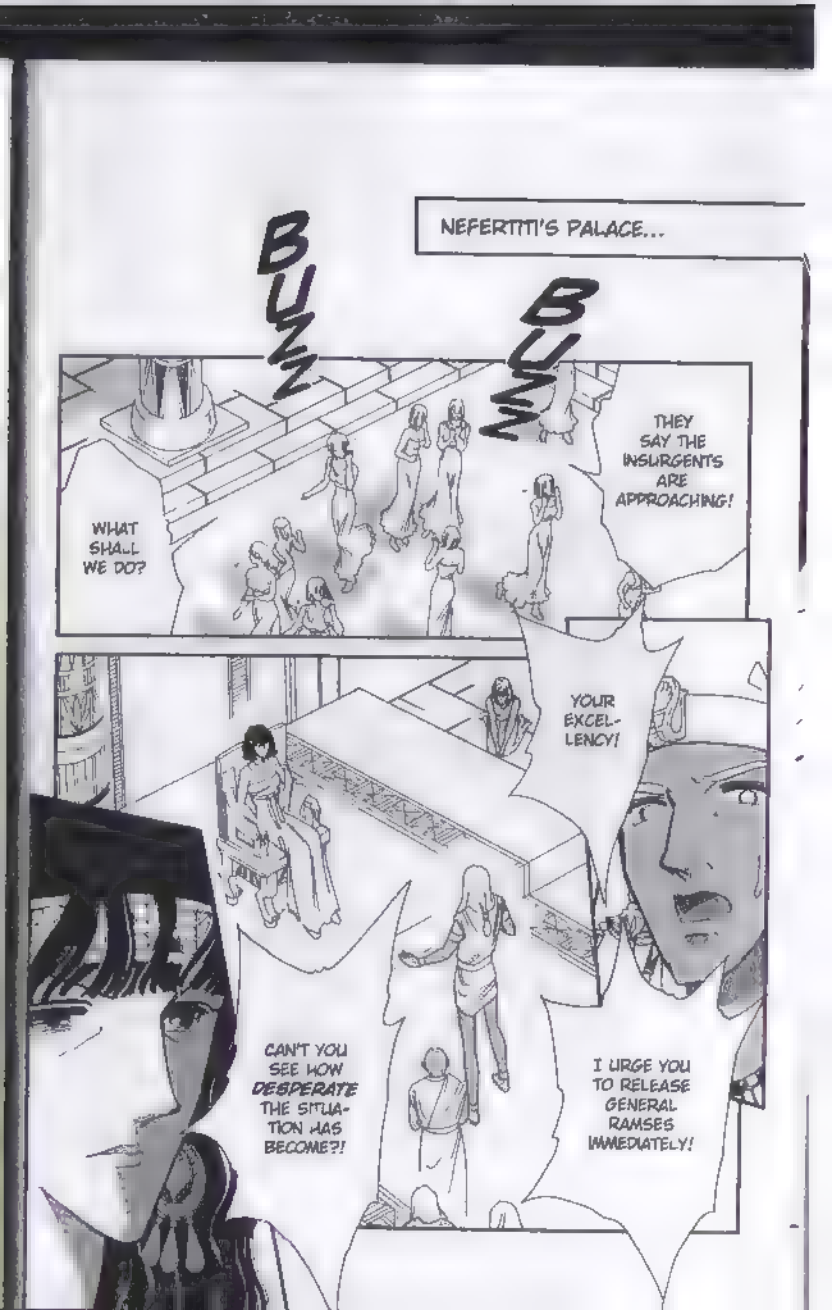

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE REBELS...
...ONCE THE IMPERIAL FORCES HAVE SUPPRESSED THEIR UPRISING?
THEY'LL CERTAINLY BE PUNISHED, WITH NONE OF THEIR DEMANDS BEING MET.
THAT'S RIGHT ...
...BUT THEY ROSE UP OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL.
OUR PURPOSE ALL ALONG HAS BEEN TO RESCUE GENERAL RAMSES.
I REALIZE THAT, BUT AS A COMMONER...
...I CAN'T HELP SYMPATHIZING WITH THEM.
THEIR ONLY REAL HOPE HAS ALWAYS RESTED WITH RAMSES, HADI.

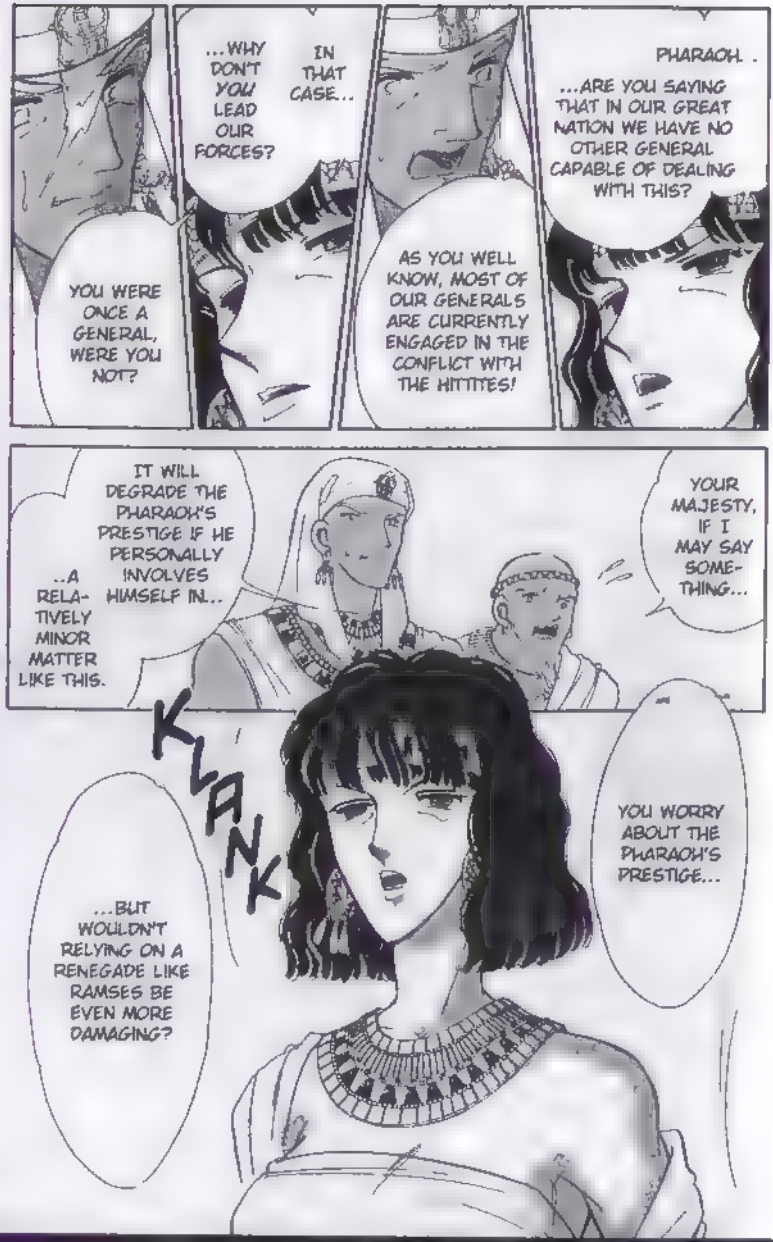

HE'S THE ONE PERSON WHO COULD MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR THEM.
WHEN HE ASSUMES MILITARY COMMAND HE WILL PUT DOWN THE REVOLT...
...AND THEN ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS THAT FOSTERED IT.
THEN THIS UPRISING...
...WASN'T JUST A RUSE TO GET...?
WHAT I WANTED? OF COURSE IT WAS.
BUT THAT'S NOT ALL IT WAS, BY ANY MEANS.
IF THERE IS ANY HOPE...
..FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE, IT RESTS WITH MEN LIKE RAMSES, MEN NOT WHOLLY BLINDED BY PRIDE AND POSITION.
RAAAH
ROAR
RAAAH

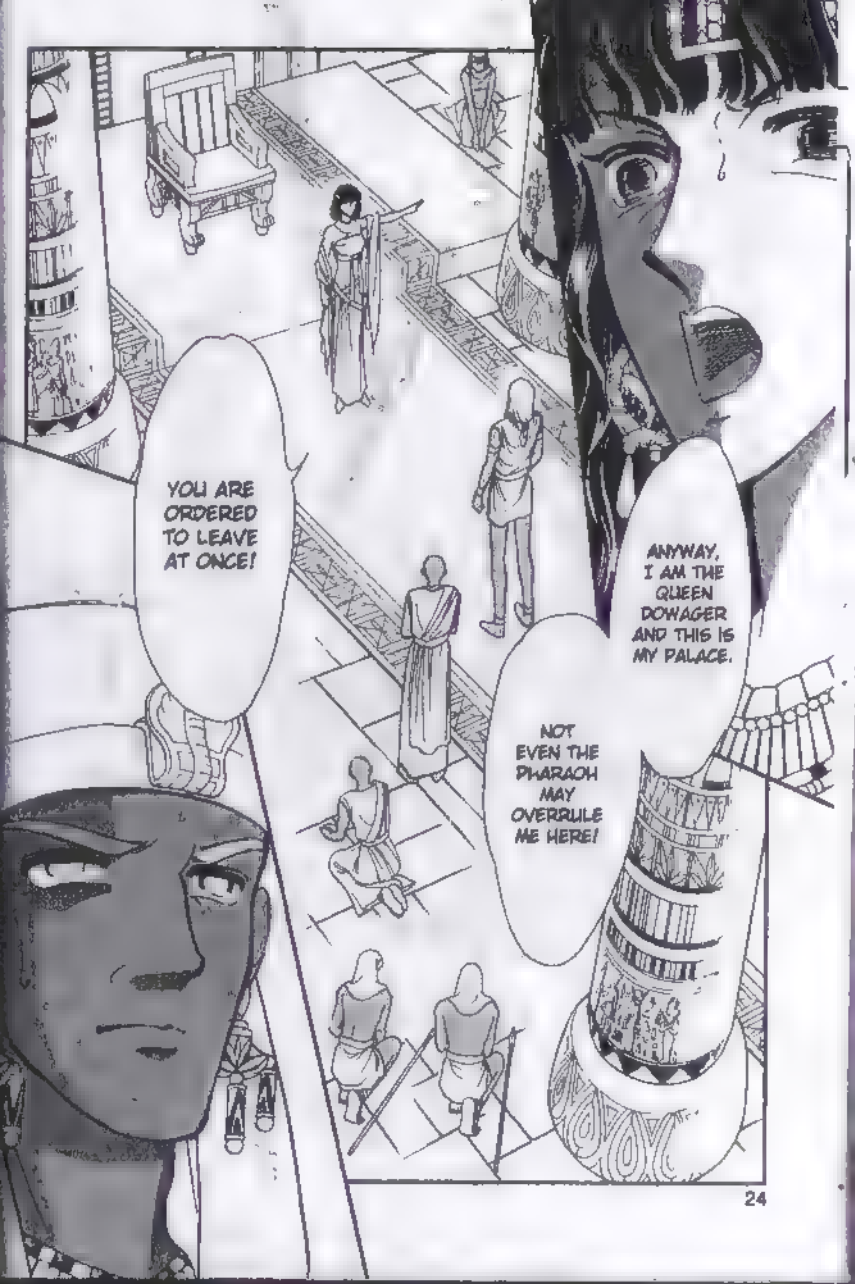

PRINCESS YURI..
WHAT IS IT, ILBANI?
I THINK IT IS I WHO MISREAD EGYPT'S QUEEN DOWAGER.
I MUST APOLO-GIZE.
BUT I WONDER IF I'VE MISREAD NEFERTITI. SHE STILL SEEMS DETERMINED TO HOLD ON TO RAMSES IN SPITE OF THE SITUATION.
RAAH RAAH
ROAR

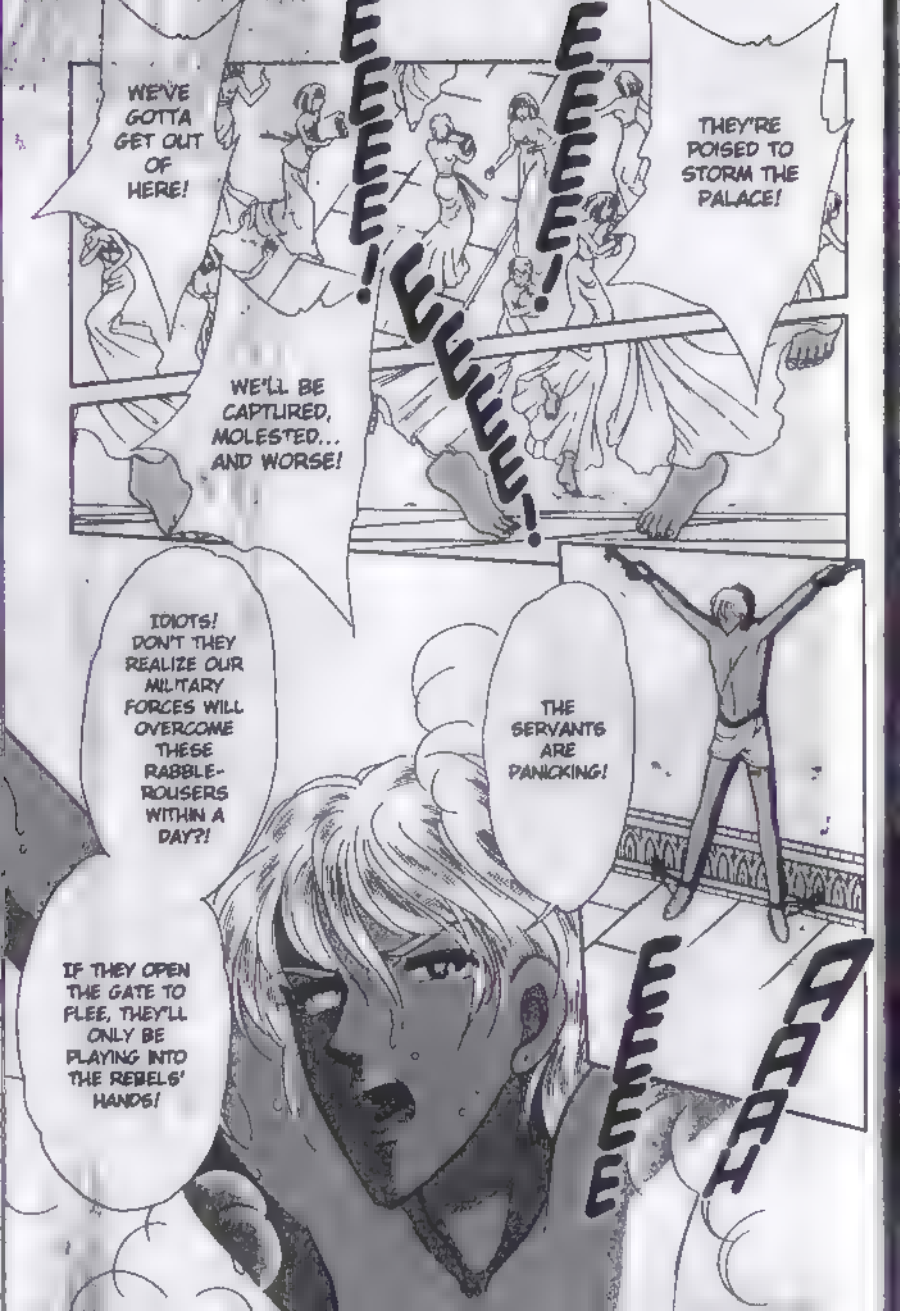
I DIDN'T IMAGINE SHE'D IMMEDIATELY JUMP TO EGYPT'S CAUSE AT THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE...
...BUT HER OBSTINACY IN THE FACE OF THEBES BEING OVERRUN HAS BEEN AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE
IF SHE'S THAT CALLOUS, THEN ALL OF THIS...
...MAY HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING, IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?
..
NO, NOT FOR NOTHING!
THIS MAY ACTUALLY PERSUADE HER TO MURDER RAMSES OUTRIGHT!
GASP
I'M... AFRAID SO.

OH MY GOD
RAMSES!
WE'VE NO TIME TO LOSE!
GET EVERYONE TOGETHER! WE'RE HEADING FOR NEFERTITI'S PALACE!

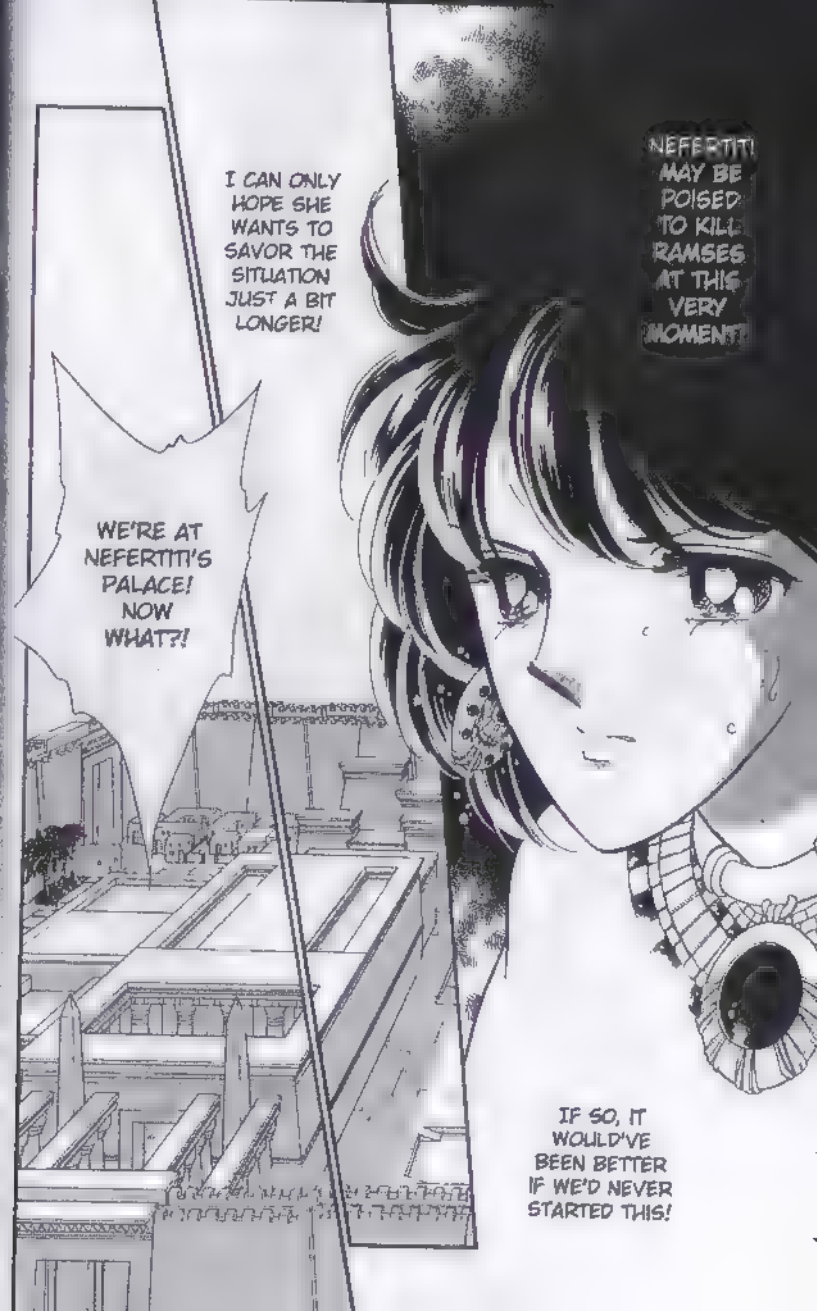

NEFERTITI'S PALACE...
BUM
BUM
WHAT SHALL WE DO?
THEY SAY THE INSURGENTS ARE APPROACHING!
YOUR EXCEL-LENCY!
CAN'T YOU SEE HOW DESPERATE THE SITUA-TION HAS BECOME?!
I URGE YOU TO RELEASE GENERAL RAMSES IMMEDIATELY!

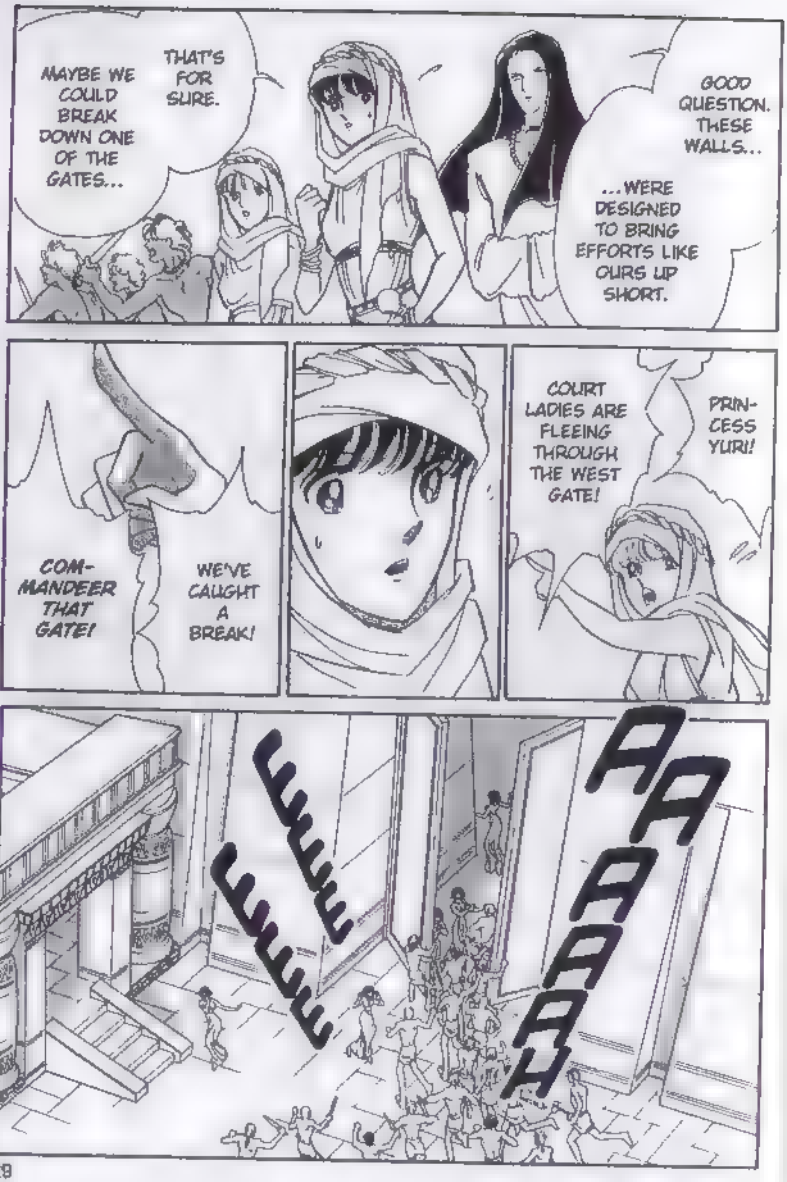

PHARAOH...
...ARE YOU SAYING THAT IN OUR GREAT NATION WE HAVE NO OTHER GENERAL CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THIS?
AS YOU WELL KNOW, MOST OF OUR GENERALS ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN THE CONFLICT WITH THE HITTITES!
IN THAT CASE...
...WHY DON'T YOU LEAD OUR FORCES?
YOU WERE ONCE A GENERAL, WERE YOU NOT?
YOUR MAJESTY, IF I MAY SAY SOMETHING...
IT WILL DEGRADE THE PHARAOH'S PRESTIGE IF HE PERSONALLY INVOLVES HIMSELF IN...
...A RELATIVELY MINOR MATTER LIKE THIS.
KLANK
YOU WORRY ABOUT THE PHARAOH'S PRESTIGE...
...BUT WOULDN'T RELYING ON A RENEGADE LIKE RAMSES BE EVEN MORE DAMAGING?


YOU ARE ORDERED TO LEAVE AT ONCE!
ANYWAY, I AM THE QUEEN DOWAGER AND THIS IS MY PALACE.
NOT EVEN THE PHARAOH MAY OVERRULE ME HERE!

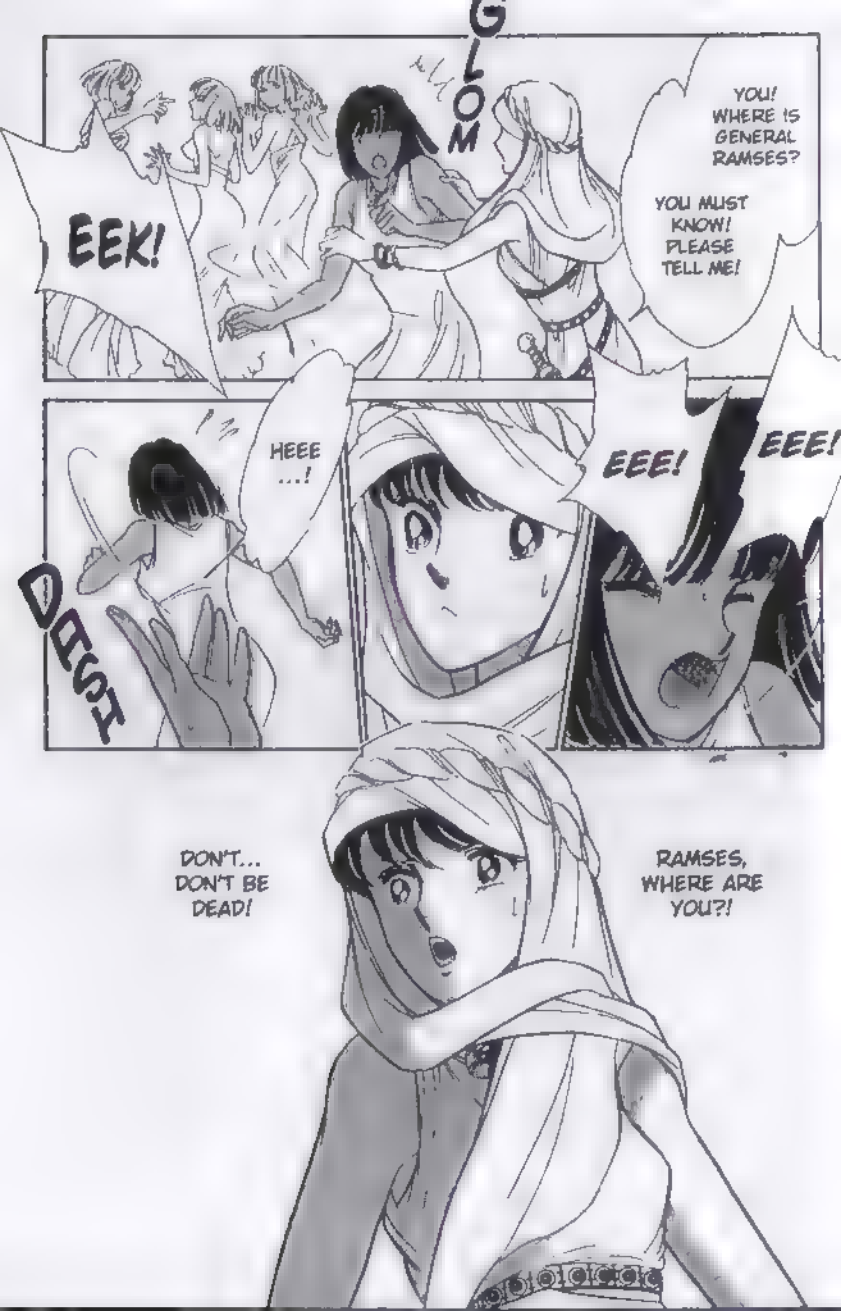

WE'VE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE!
EEEEE!
EEEEE!
THEY'RE POISED TO STORM THE PALACE!
WE'LL BE CAPTURED, MOLESTED... AND WORSE!
IDIOTS! DON'T THEY REALIZE OUR MILITARY FORCES WILL OVERCOME THESE RABBLE-ROUSERS WITHIN A DAY?!
THE SERVANTS ARE PANICKING!
IF THEY OPEN THE GATE TO FLEE, THEY'LL ONLY BE PLAYING INTO THE REBELS' HANDS!
EEEEE
AAAH

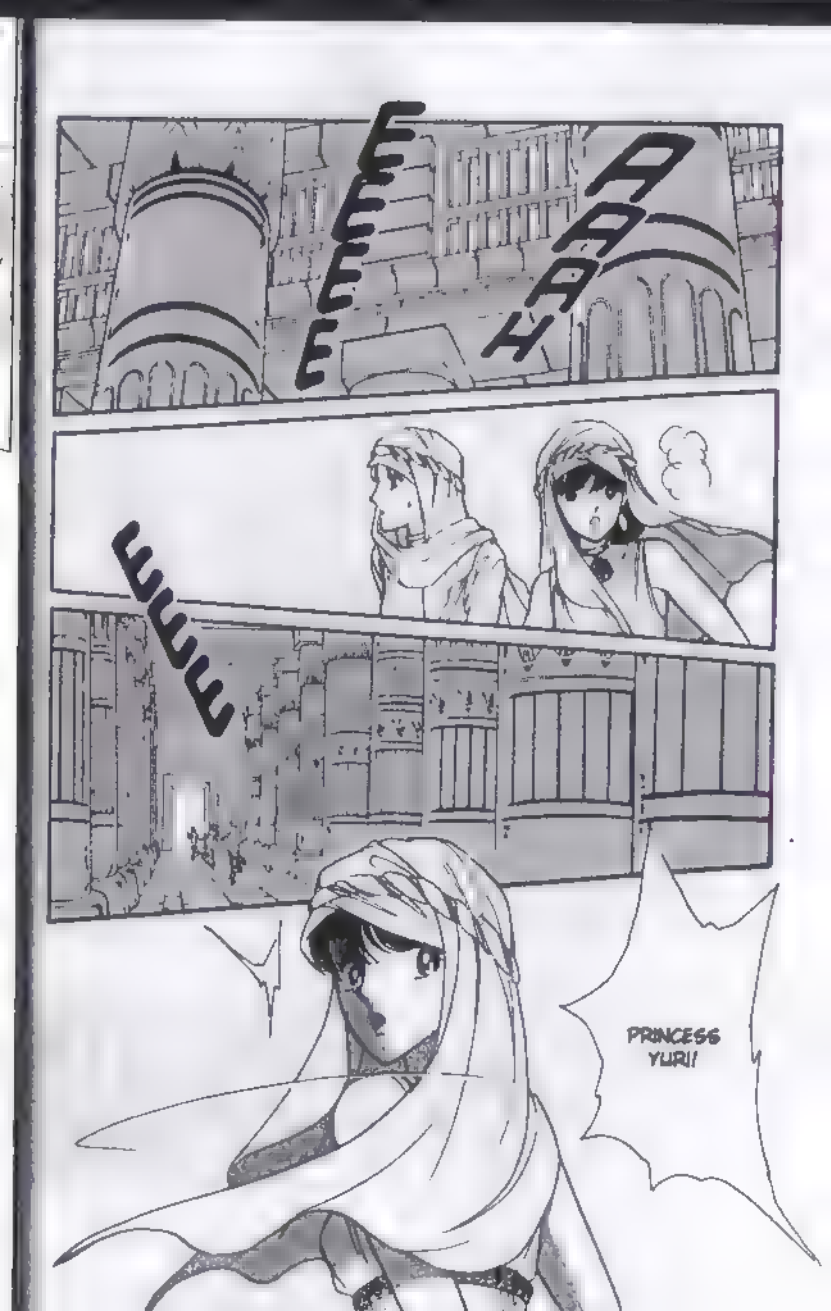
HO!
STILL ABLE TO RAISE YOUR VOICE, EH?
YOU MUST RELEASE ME!
YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
NEVER!
ALLOW ME TO SUPPRESS THIS UPRISING!

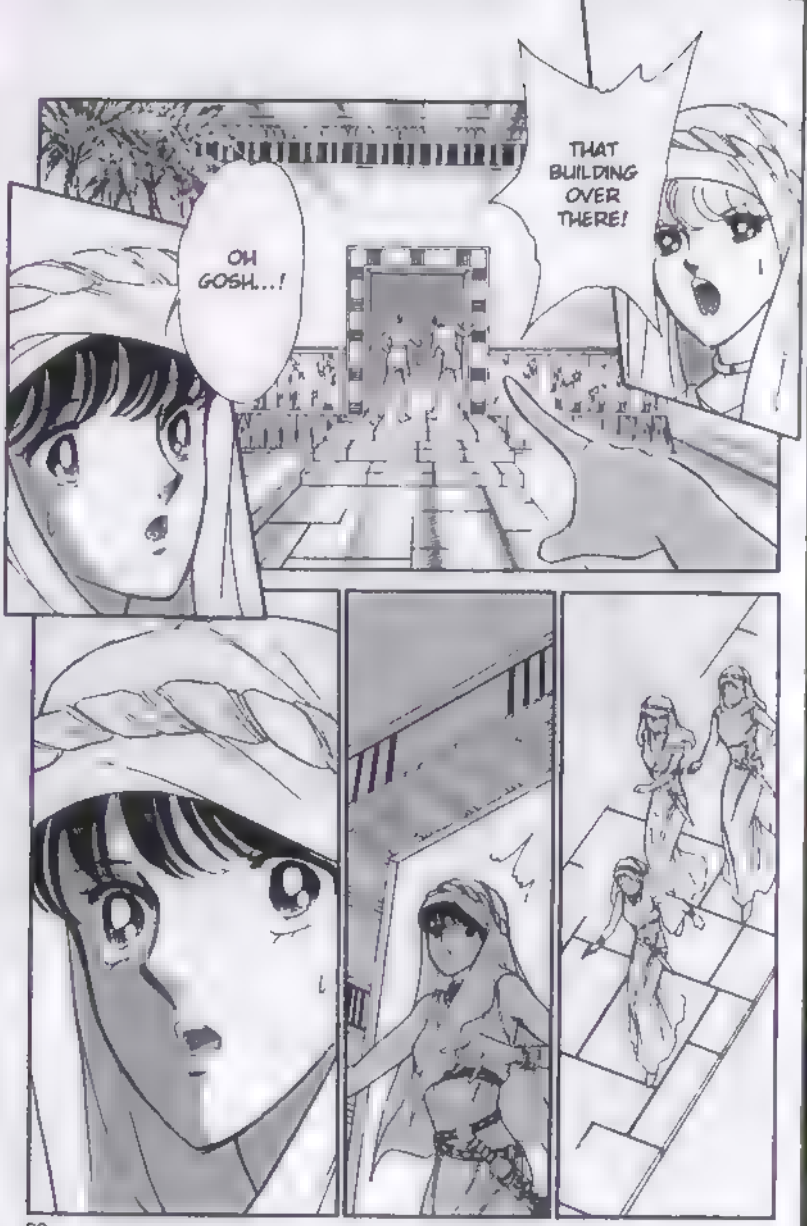

NEFERTITI MAY BE POISED TO KILL RAMSES AT THIS VERY MOMENT!
I CAN ONLY HOPE SHE WANTS TO SAVOR THE SITUATION JUST A BIT LONGER!
WE'RE AT NEFERTITI'S PALACE! NOW WHAT?!
IF SO, IT WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER IF WE'D NEVER STARTED THIS!

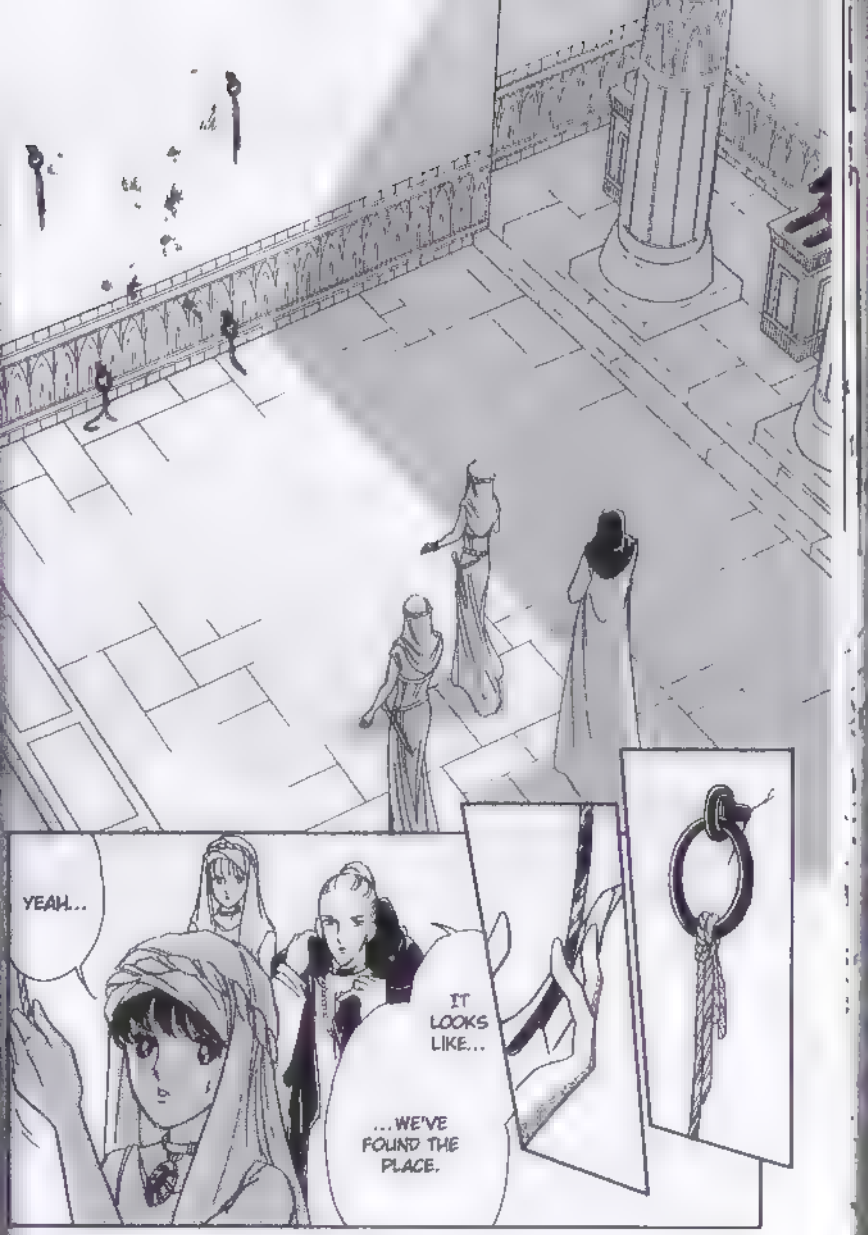

MAYBE WE COULD BREAK DOWN ONE OF THE GATES...
THAT'S FOR SURE.
GOOD QUESTION. THESE WALLS...
...WERE DESIGNED TO BRING EFFORTS LIKE OURS UP SHORT.
COM-MANDEER THAT GATE!
WE'VE CAUGHT A BREAK!
COURT LADIES ARE FLEEING THROUGH THE WEST GATE!
PRIN-CESS YURI!
AAAAAH
UUUUU
UUUUU

RROOAR
YES, MA'AM!
GREAT! NOW STAY HERE AND HOLD IT! IT'S OUR ONLY WAY OUT!
PRINCESS YURI!
WE'VE TAKEN THE WEST GATE!
SEARCH EVERYWHERE! AND HURRY! TIME'S RUNNING OUT!
AS FOR THE REST OF YOU. FIND GENERAL RAMSES!
AAAH
EEEE
EEEE

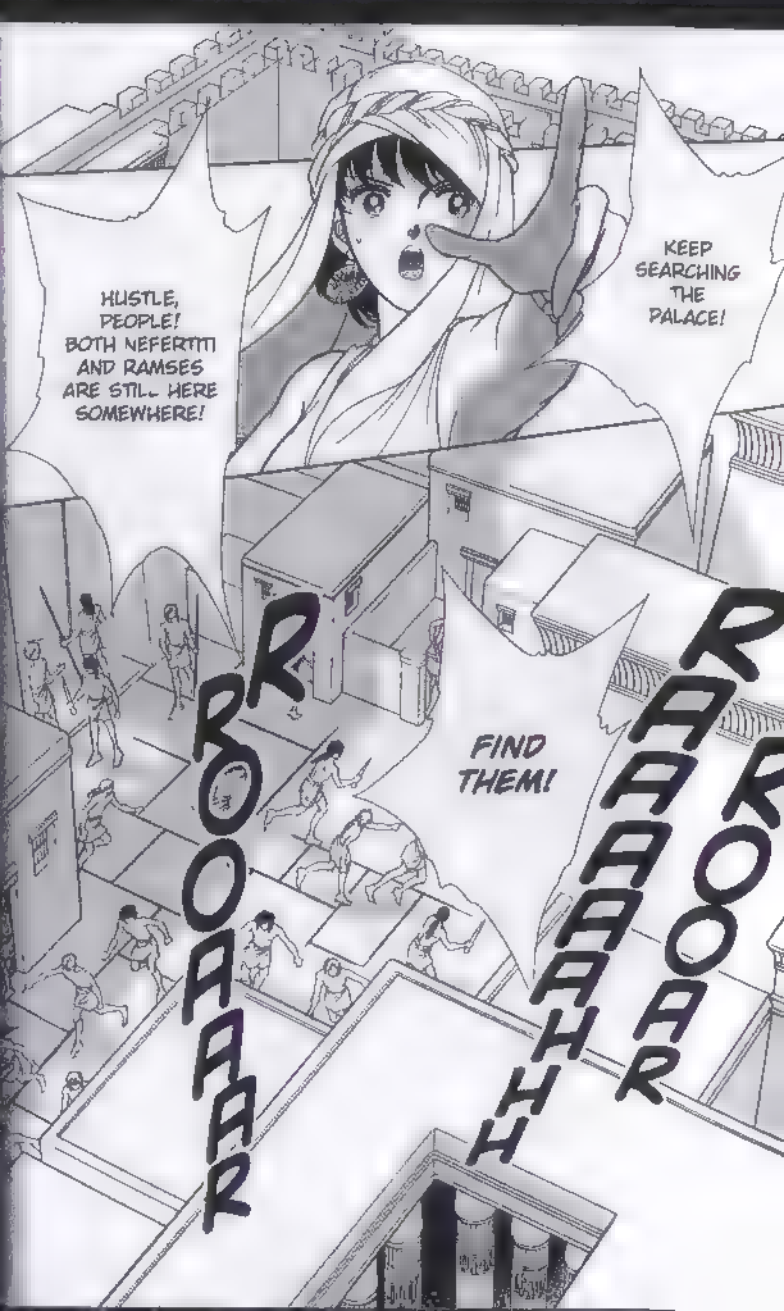

GLOM
EEK!
YOU! WHERE IS GENERAL RAMSES?
YOU MUST KNOW! PLEASE TELL ME!
HEEE ...!
EEE!
EEE!
DEST
DON'T... DON'T BE DEAD!
RAMSES, WHERE ARE YOU?!


AAAH
EEEEE
WWW
PRINCESS YURI!

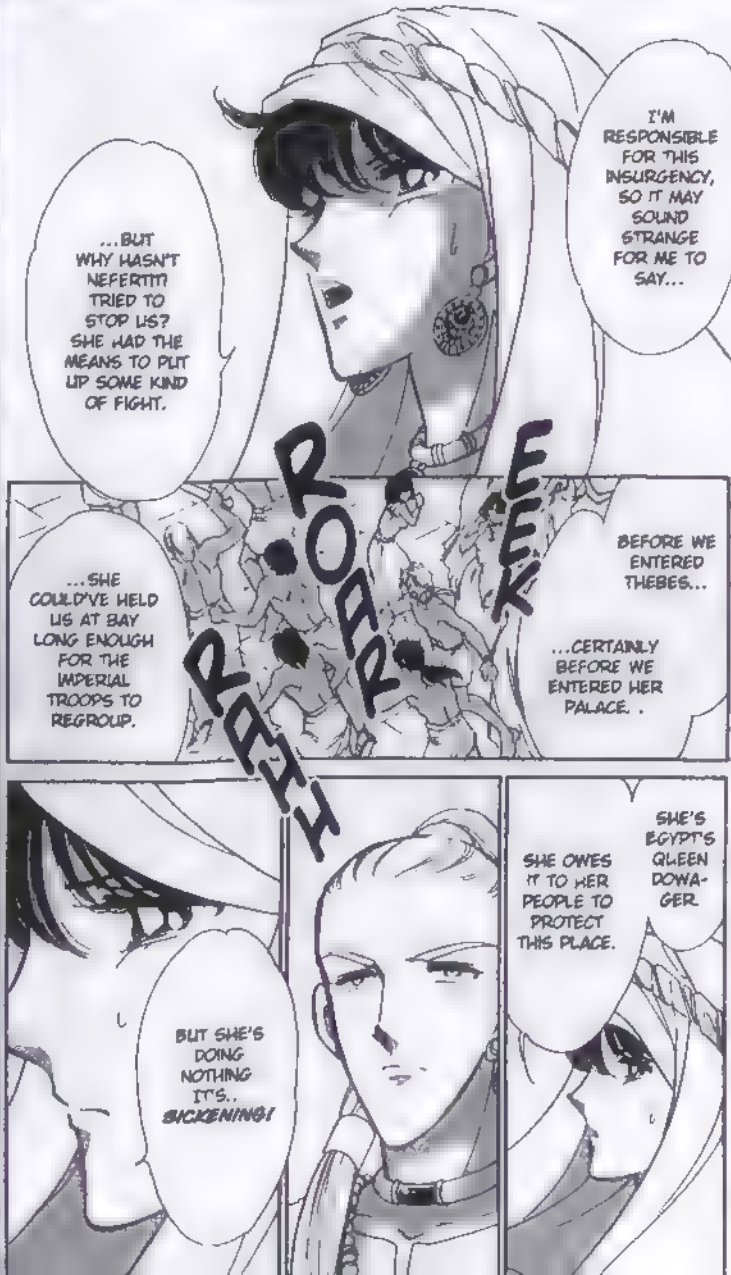

THAT BUILDING OVER THERE!
OH GOSH...!

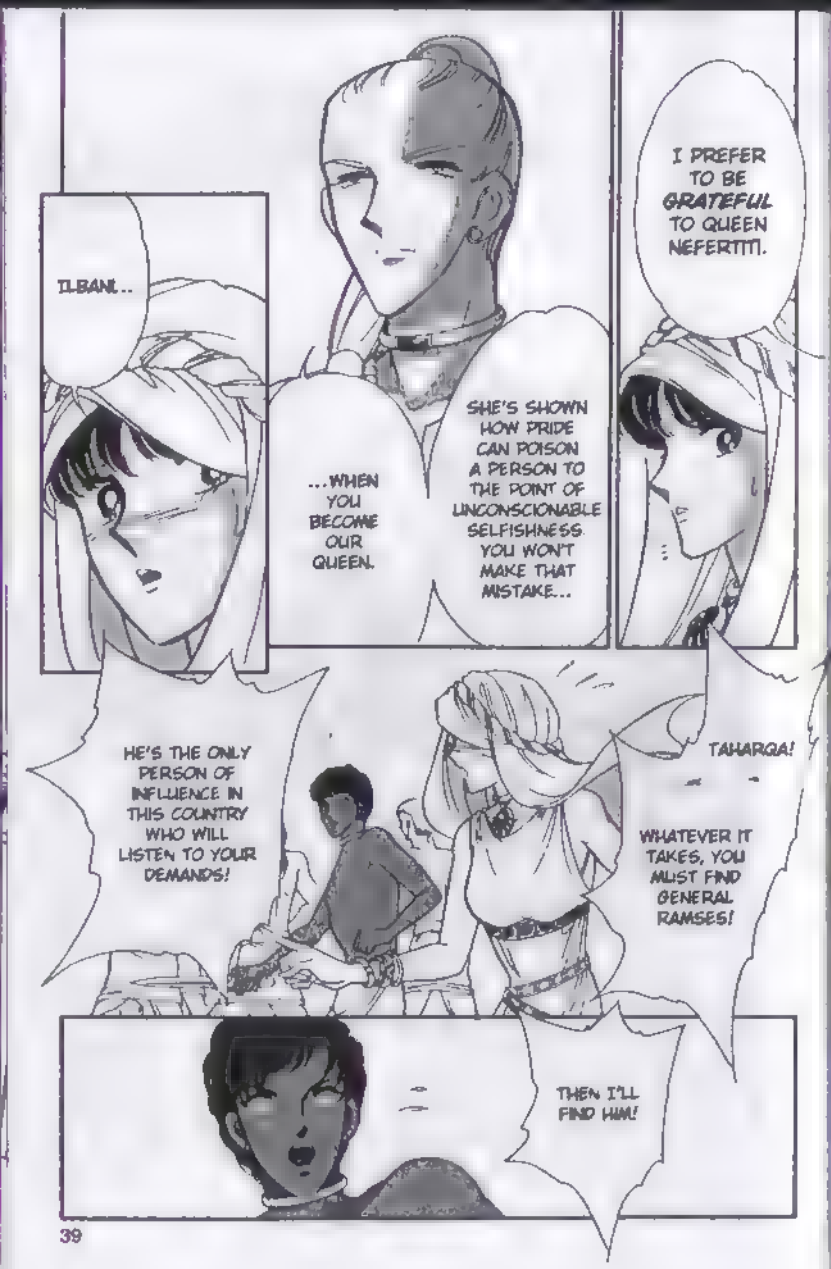

YEAH...
IT LOOKS LIKE...
...WE'VE FOUND THE PLACE.

BLOOD'S STILL WET.
HE MUST'VE JUST BEEN CUT DOWN.
FIND HIM!
HE CAN'T BE FAR AWAY!
WHERE *ARE* YOU, RAMSES?!


HUSTLE, PEOPLE! BOTH NEFERTITI AND RAMSES ARE STILL HERE SOMEWHERE!
KEEP SEARCHING THE PALACE!
FIND THEM!
RROOAAR
RAAAAAHHH
RROOAR

EEEK
EEEE
TELL OUR GUARDS AT THE GATE. .
.TO WATCH FOR ESCAPEES! NO ONE IS TO LEAVE THE PALACE UNTIL I SAY SO!
RAAH
ROAR
IT MAKES ME ANGRY...
WHAT DOES, PRINCESS YURI?
YES, MA'AM!
AND THE SAME GOES FOR ANYONE TRYING TO ENTER!

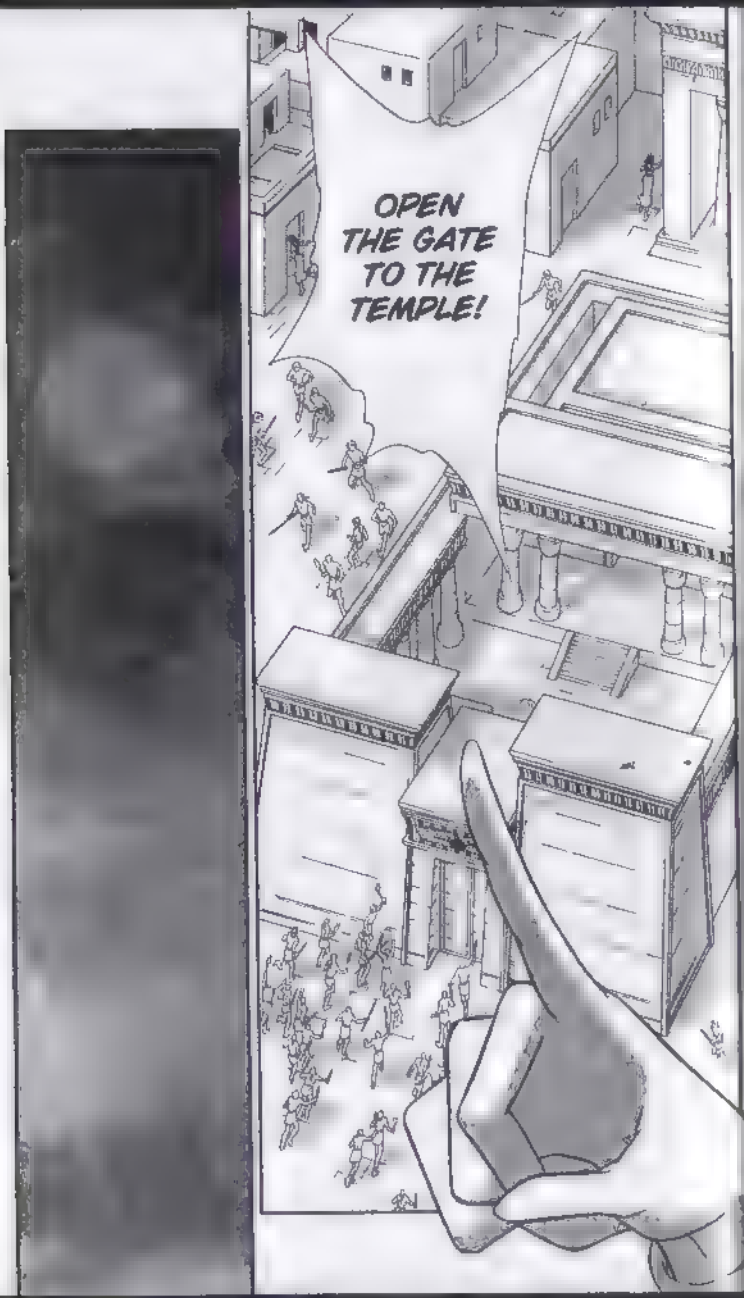

I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS INSURGENCY, SO IT MAY SOUND STRANGE FOR ME TO SAY...
...BUT WHY HASN'T NEFERTITI TRIED TO STOP US? SHE HAD THE MEANS TO PUT UP SOME KIND OF FIGHT.
EEK
ROER
RRR
BEFORE WE ENTERED THEBES...
...CERTAINLY BEFORE WE ENTERED HER PALACE. .
...SHE COULD'VE HELD US AT BAY LONG ENOUGH FOR THE IMPERIAL TROOPS TO REGROUP.
SHE'S EGYPT'S QUEEN DOWAGER.
SHE OWES IT TO HER PEOPLE TO PROTECT THIS PLACE.
BUT SHE'S DOING NOTHING IT'S.. SICKENING!


I PREFER TO BE GRATEFUL TO QUEEN NEFERTITI.
ILBANI...
...WHEN YOU BECOME OUR QUEEN.
SHE'S SHOWN HOW PRIDE CAN POISON A PERSON TO THE POINT OF UNCONSCIONABLE SELFISHNESS. YOU WON'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE...
TAHARQA!
HE'S THE ONLY PERSON OF INFLUENCE IN THIS COUNTRY WHO WILL LISTEN TO YOUR DEMANDS!
WHATEVER IT TAKES, YOU MUST FIND GENERAL RAMSES!
THEN I'LL FIND HIM!

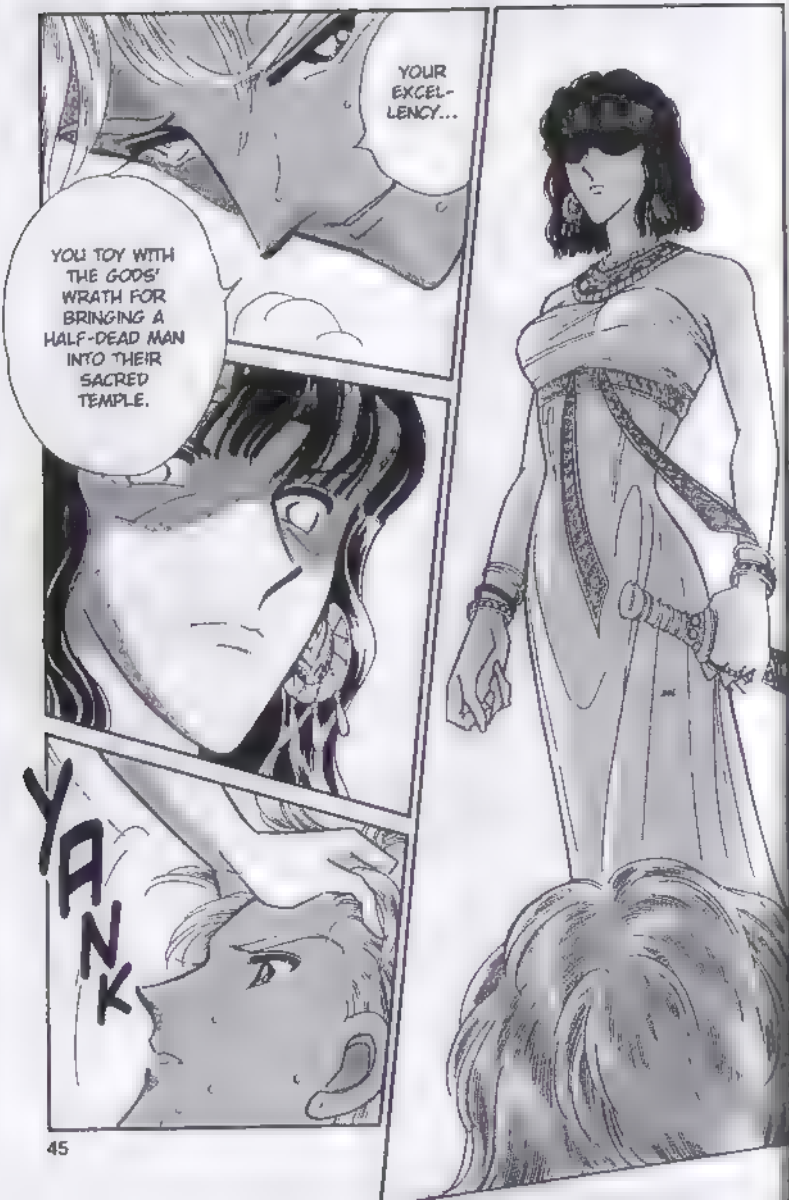
ROAR
IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, ANSWER!
RAMSES! WHERE ARE YOU?!
ROAR
ROAR
RAMSES!

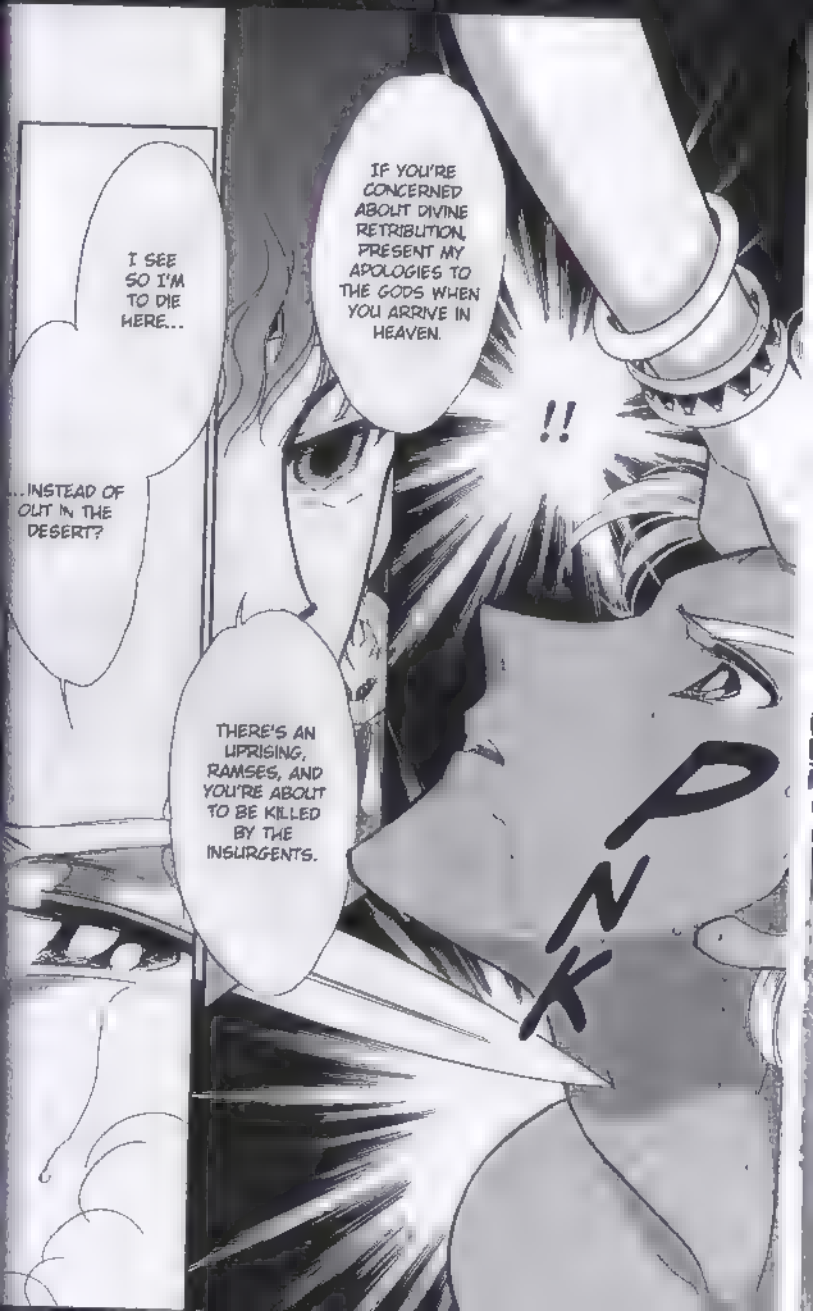
I WONDER IF HE'S ALREADY...
STILL NO LUCK?
NO, MA'AM. I'M SORRY.
ROAR
RAAHH
ROAR
RRR

IT LOOKS LIKE THE PALACE TEMPLE.
DID YOU SEARCH IT YET?
RAH
ROER
WHAT'S THAT BUILDING?
NO, MA'AM! WE CAN'T!
ONLY MEMBERS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY AND THE PRIESTS ARE ALLOWED TO ENTER.
DASH
NO, PRINCESS YURI! DON'T GO IN THERE!
WHATEVER I HAVE TO SUFFER FOR IT, I'M GOING IN!


OPEN THE GATE TO THE TEMPLE!

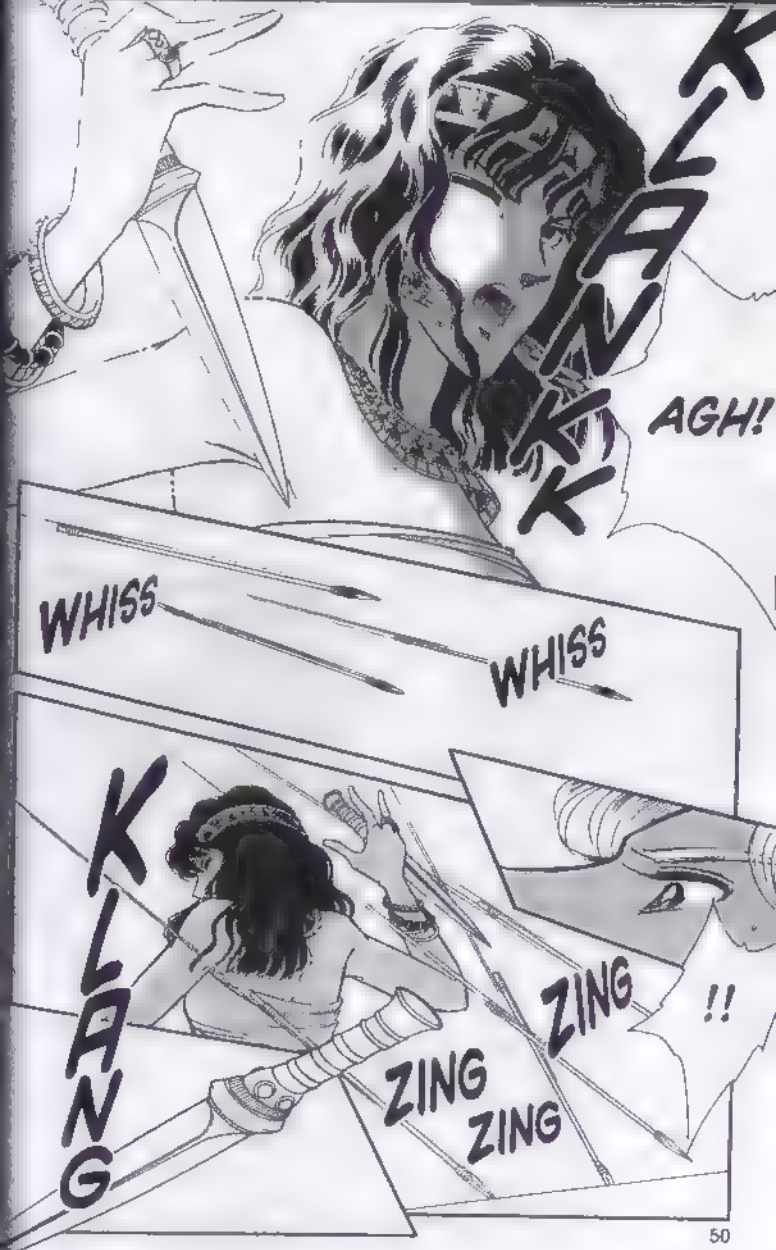
RRORAR
RRAAAH


YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
YOU TOY WITH THE GODS' WRATH FOR BRINGING A HALF-DEAD MAN INTO THEIR SACRED TEMPLE.
YANK


I SEE SO I'M TO DIE HERE...
...INSTEAD OF OUT IN THE DESERT?
THERE'S AN UPRISING, RAMSES, AND YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE KILLED BY THE INSURGENTS.
IF YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT DIVINE RETRIBUTION, PRESENT MY APOLOGIES TO THE GODS WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN HEAVEN.
!!
PNK

YOUR EXCEL-LENCY
AFTER I'M DEAD, ARE YOU PREPARED FOR WHAT'S NEXT?
THIS REVOLT WILL BE PUT DOWN, BUT THAT ANGER WILL REMAIN.
THE ANGER OF THE PEOPLE RINGS IN YOUR EARS.
EGYPT MEANS NOTHING TO ME ITS PEOPLE ARE SCUM.
— AS IF I CARED!
ALL I CHERISH IS MY POSITION, WHICH I GAINED BY MY OWN EFFORTS. NO ONE HELPED ME.

THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO KILL YOU, RAMSES!
THE PRESENT REGIME MAY WELL COLLAPSE, BUT I WILL KEEP MY POSITION!
YOU POSE AN OBSTACLE TO THAT! YOU ALONE!
GOLMO


KLANK
AGH!
WHISS
WHISS
KLANG
ZING
ZING
ZING
!!

WHO... WHO DID THAT?!

RAMSES!
NICE TO SEE YOU'RE STILL WITH US!
GLINT

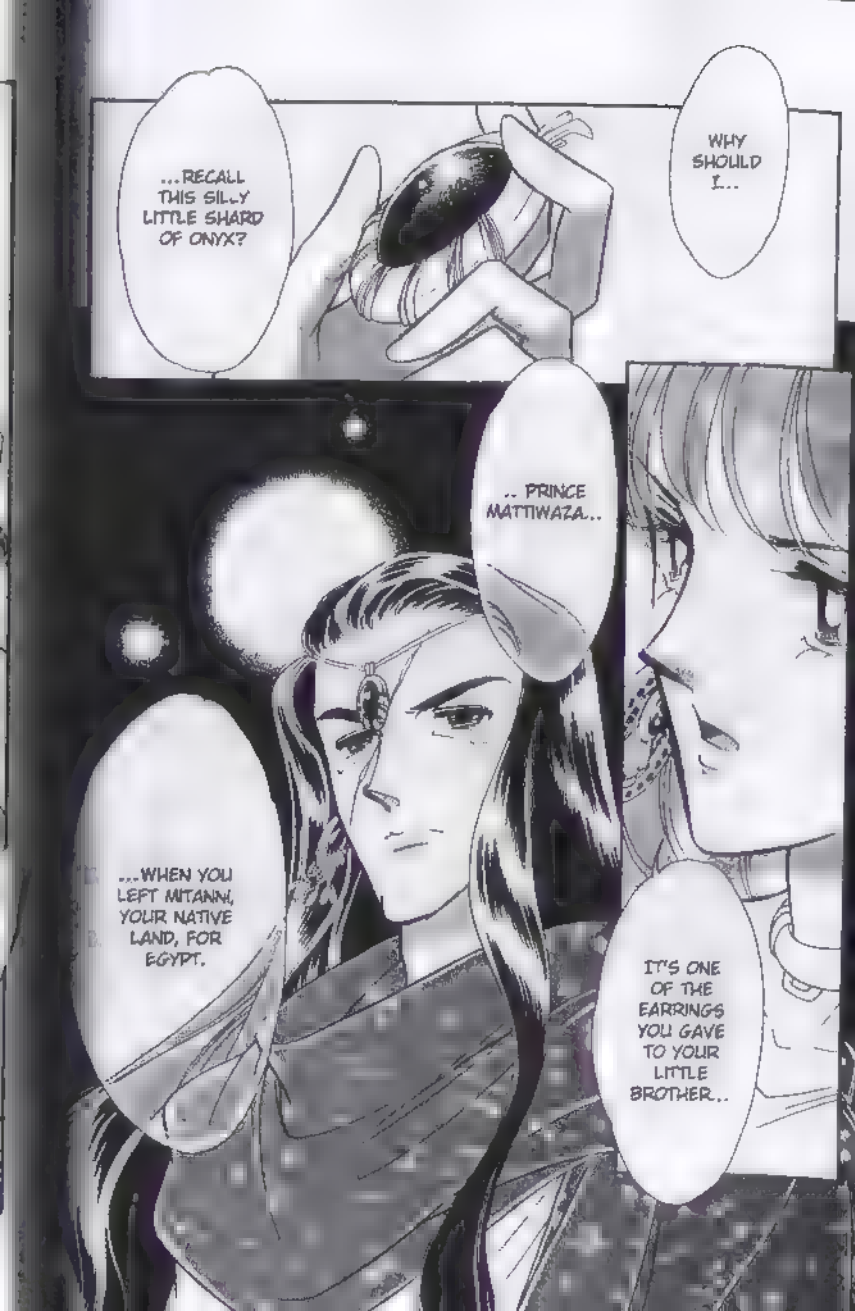
YURI?!
WHO ARE YOU?!
I'M HERE FOR ONE REASON— TO FREE GENERAL RAMSES!
QUEEN DOWAGER!
TMP
AH... YOU'RE...
NAPTELLA... NEFERTARI... IS THAT RIGHT?
...RAMSES' FIANCÉE!

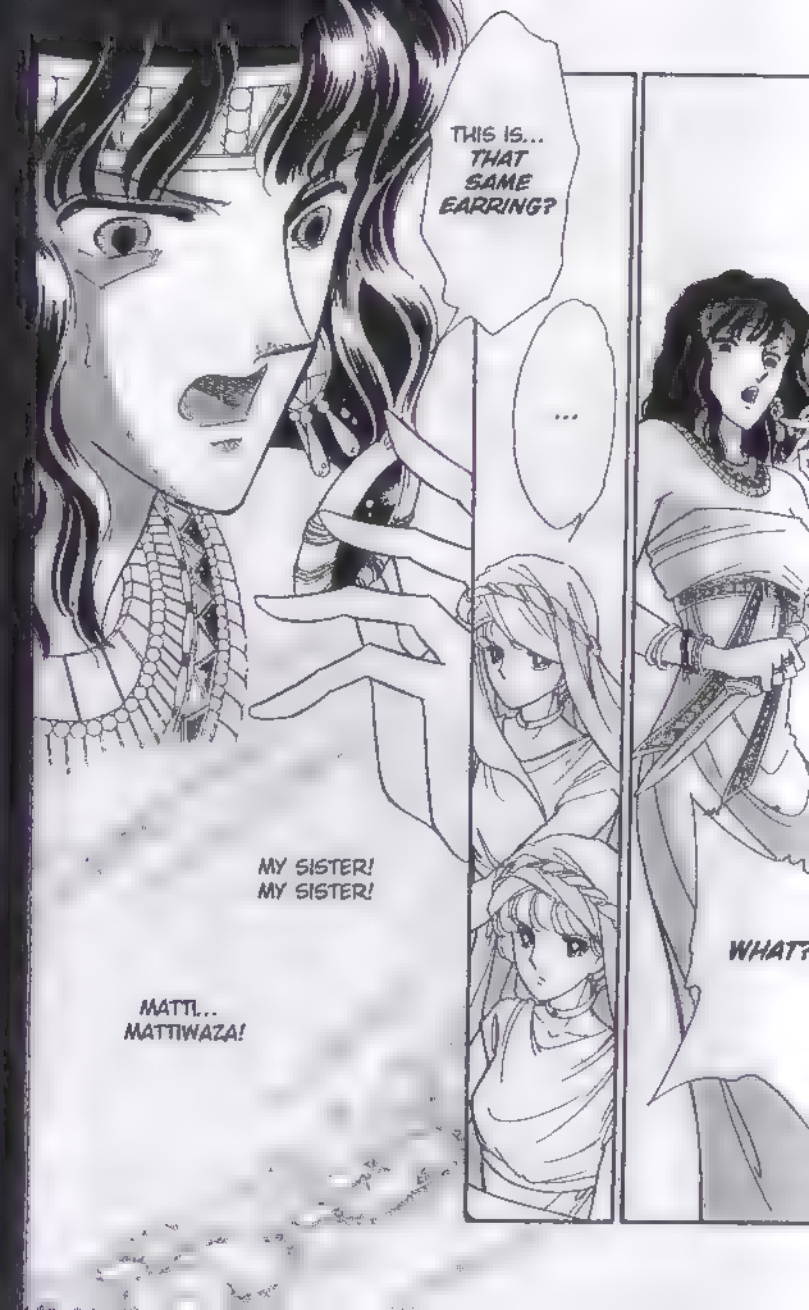
WAS IT YOU WHO STIRRED THE PASSIONS OF...
.. OF MY PEOPLE?
IN NO WAY DID I SUSPECT...
...YOU WOULD BE INVOLVED IN ALL OF THIS.
I WON'T DENY I ENCOURAGED THEM TO RISE UP.
THING IS, THEIR RULERS HAD PRIMED THEM FOR IT.
THE SUFFERING THEY'VE ENDURED UNDER YOUR CALLOUS RULE HAS ASSURED THAT THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.
HMPH!
THAT'S UTTER NSENSE. U SOUND LIKE AMSES.

IF YOU WILL HAVE ME CARRY OUT MY DUTY AS QUEEN DOWAGER OF EGYPT...
...I WILL BE HAPPY TO SEE THIS TRAITOR WHO PLOTTED TO DESTROY OUR NATION EXECUTED...
AND I'VE NO INTEREST IN ARGUING WITH YOU!
...RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES!
THUD
NEFERTITI!

!!
!!
SNAP

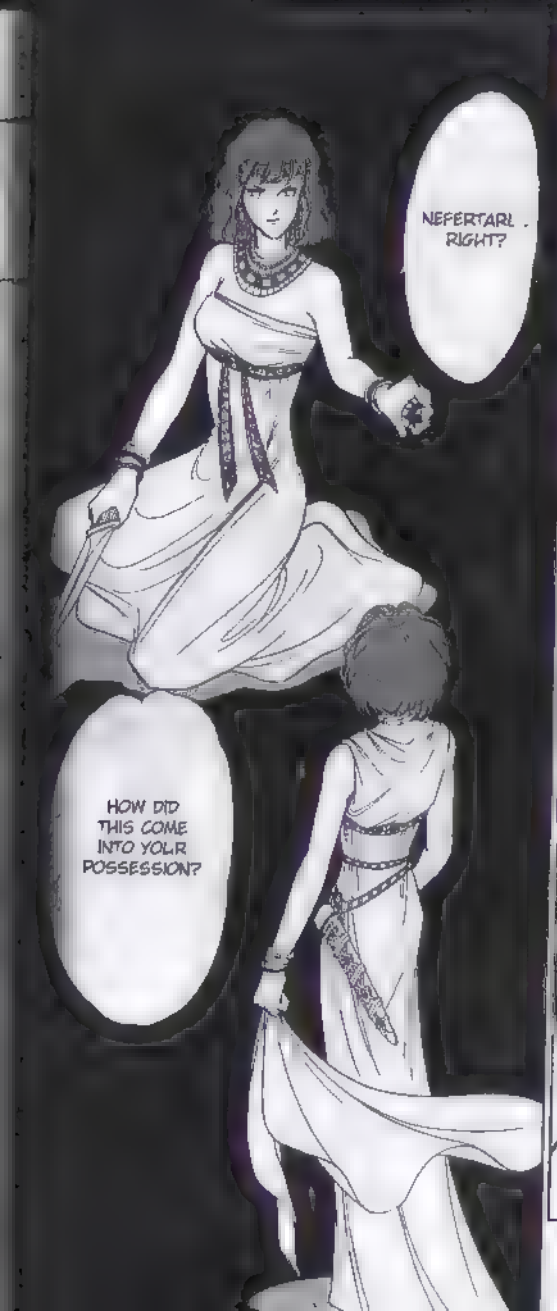
!!
WHOCK
SWING
DID YOU THINK TO STAY MY HAND WITH THIS LITTLE OBJECT?
HOW FOOLISH!
EH?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER IT, YOUR EXCELLENCY?!


WHY SHOULD I...
...RECALL THIS SILLY LITTLE SHARD OF ONYX?
.. PRINCE MATTIWAZA..
IT'S ONE OF THE EARRINGS YOU GAVE TO YOUR LITTLE BROTHER..
...WHEN YOU LEFT MITANNI, YOUR NATIVE LAND, FOR EGYPT.

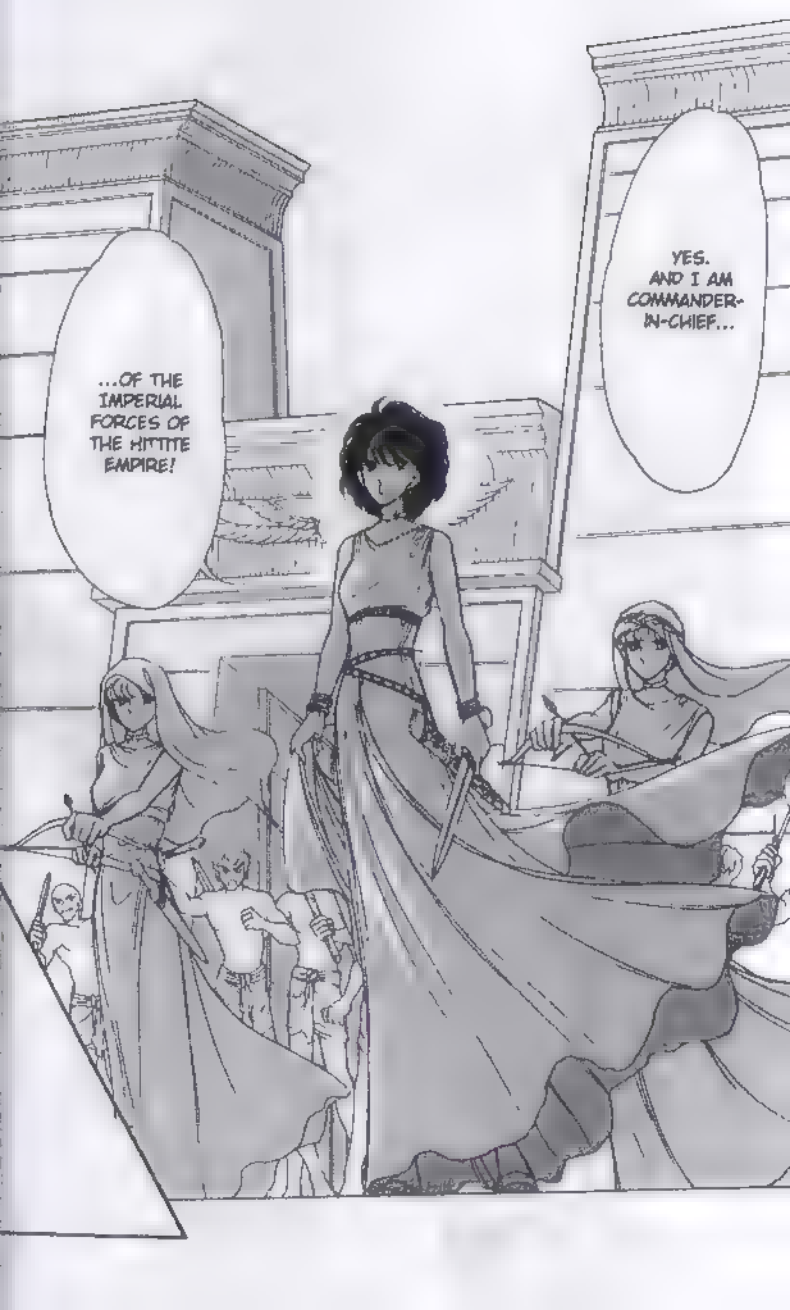

THIS IS... THAT SAME EARRING?
...
MY SISTER! MY SISTER!
MATTI... MATTIWAZA!
WHAT?

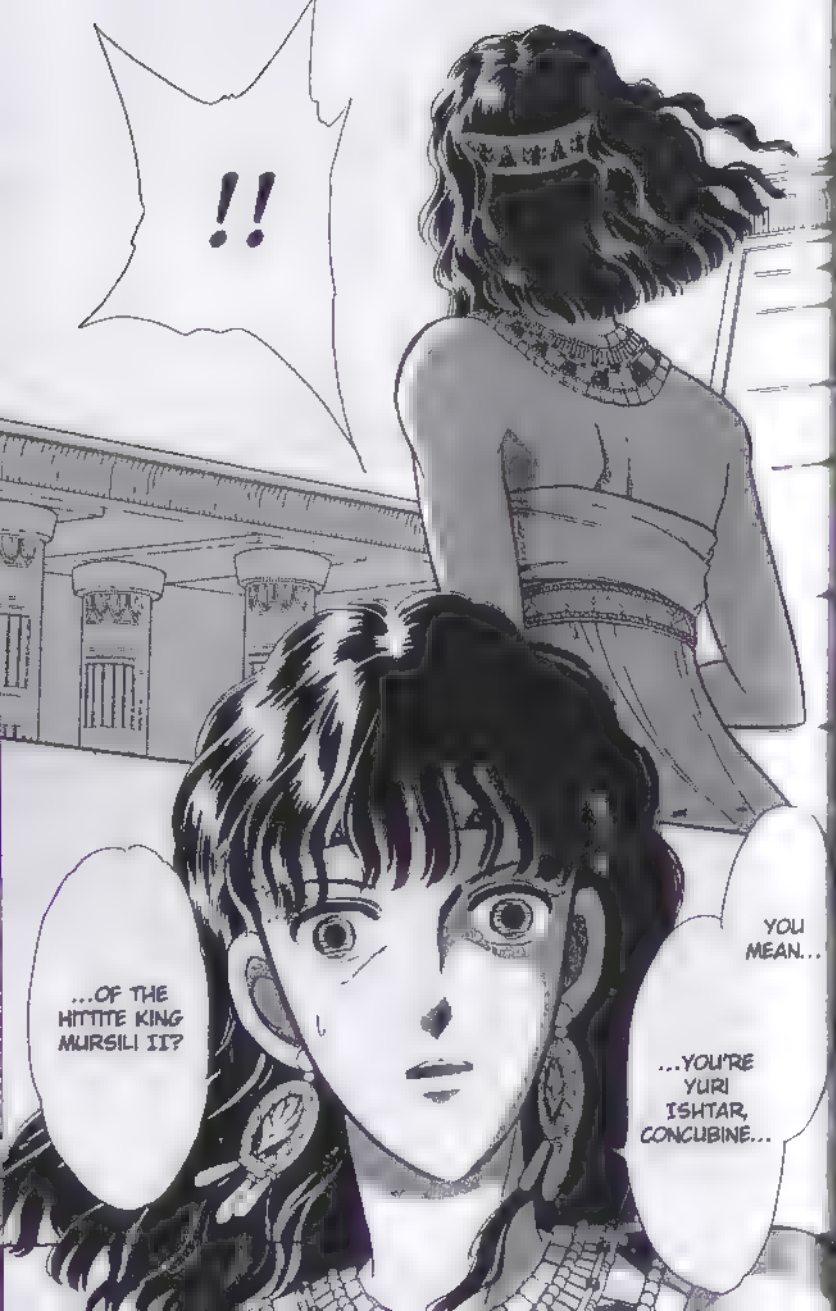
MY SISTER!
MY SISTER! LET'S RUN AWAY!
MATTI.
YOU SHOULD NOT SACRIFICE YOURSELF..
TO BECOME A CONCUBINE OF THE EGYPTIAN PHARAOH!
I'LL ESCAPE WITH YOU..
...AND SEE THAT NO HARM COMES TO YOU!
MY SISTER!
...THE SUPPORT WE'VE BEEN GETTING FROM EGYPT.
IF WE RUN AWAY, OUR COUNTRY WILL LOSE.
WE CAN'T, MATTI.

I LOVE YOU, MATTI!
MY SISTER!
KEEP THIS WITH YOU!
MY SISTER!

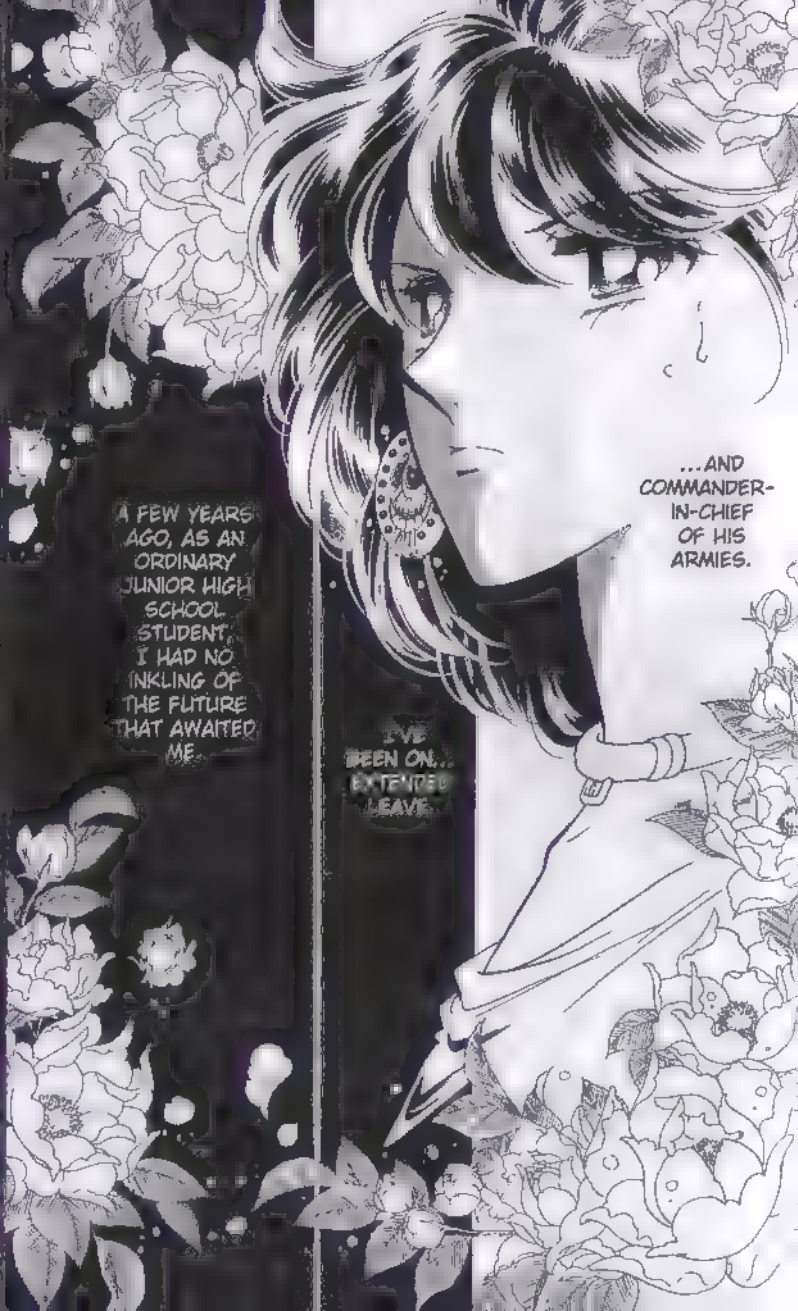

NEFERTARI, RIGHT?
HOW DID THIS COME INTO YOUR POSSESSION?

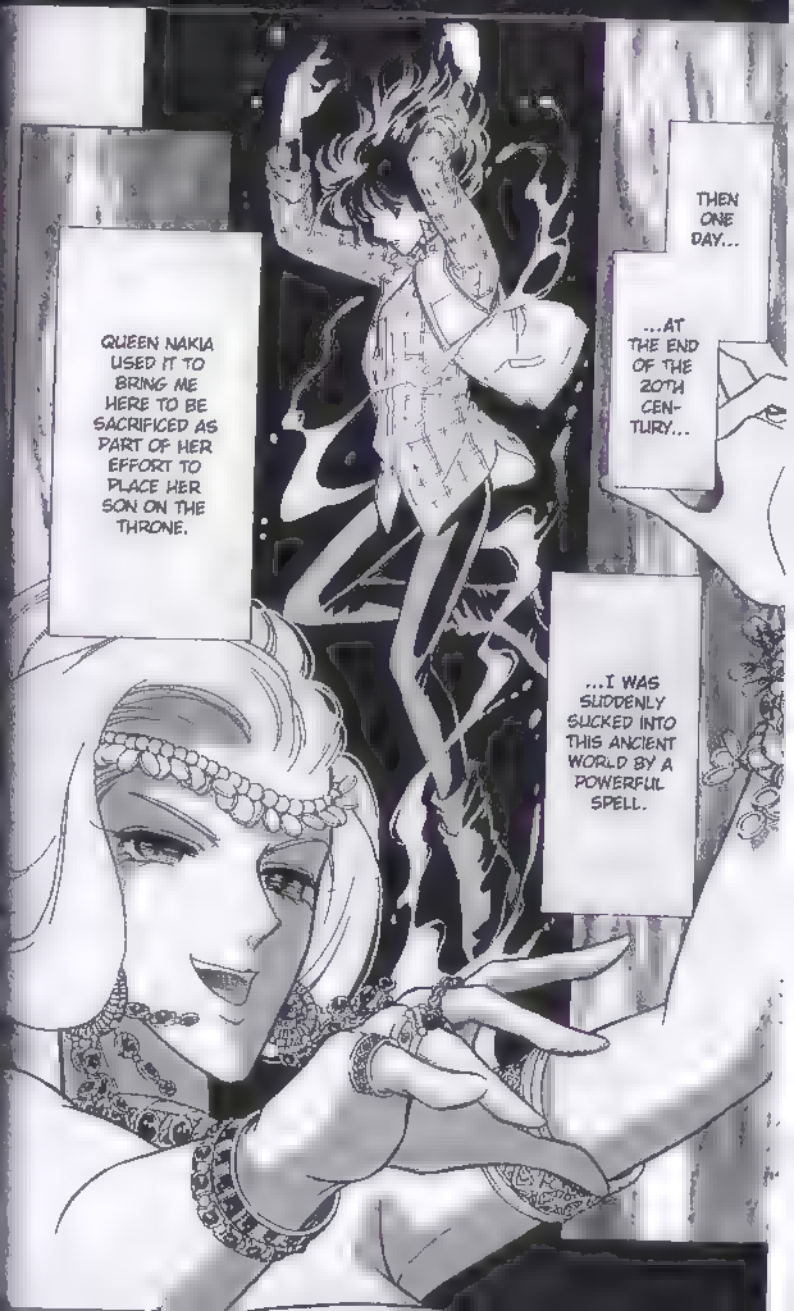
MY REAL NAME IS...
..YURI.
YURI...?

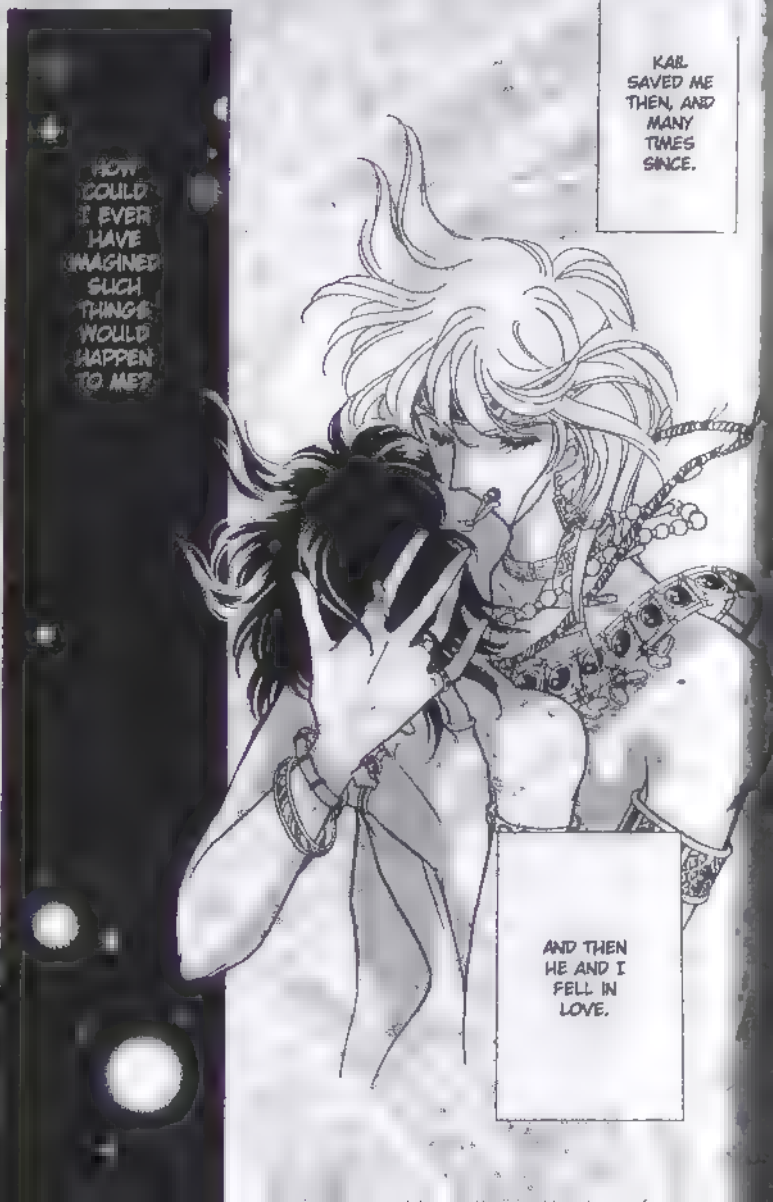

...OF THE IMPERIAL FORCES OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE!
YES. AND I AM COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF...

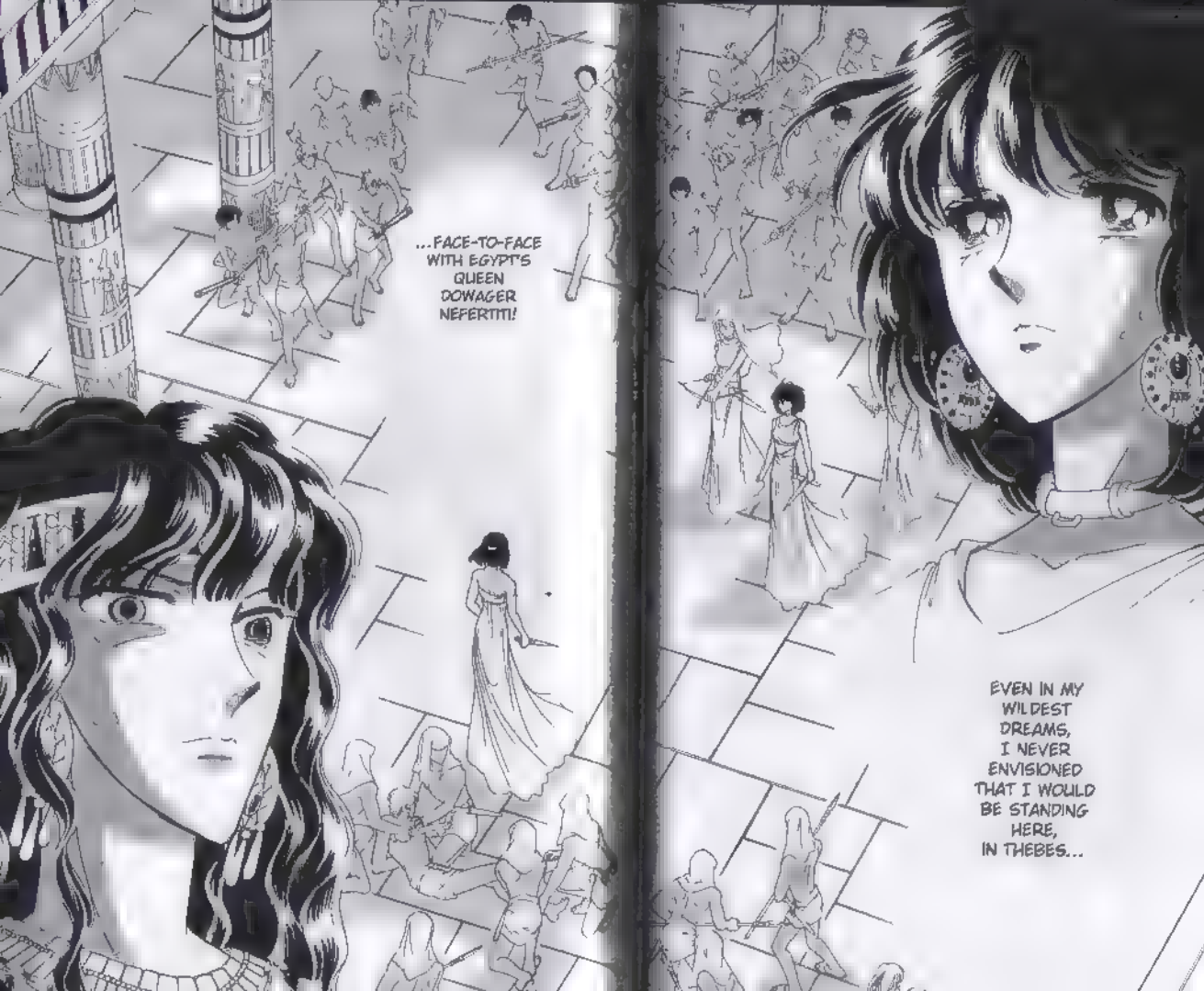

!!
...OF THE HITTITE KING MURSILI II?
...YOU'RE YURI ISHTAR, CONCUBINE...
YOU MEAN...

YES, I AM KAIL MURSILI'S CONCUBINE...
...YURI ISHTAR...

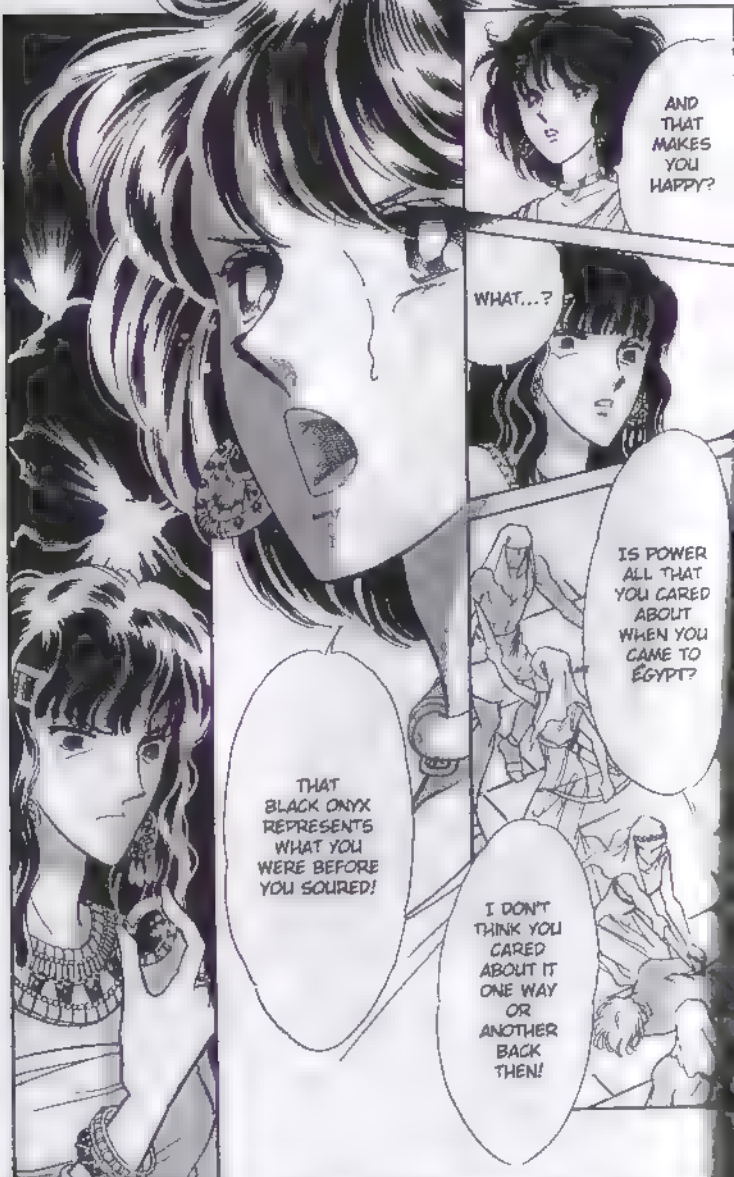

A FEW YEARS AGO, AS AN ORDINARY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, I HAD NO INKLING OF THE FUTURE THAT AWAITED ME.
I'VE BEEN ON... EXTENDED LEAVE...
...AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF HIS ARMIES.

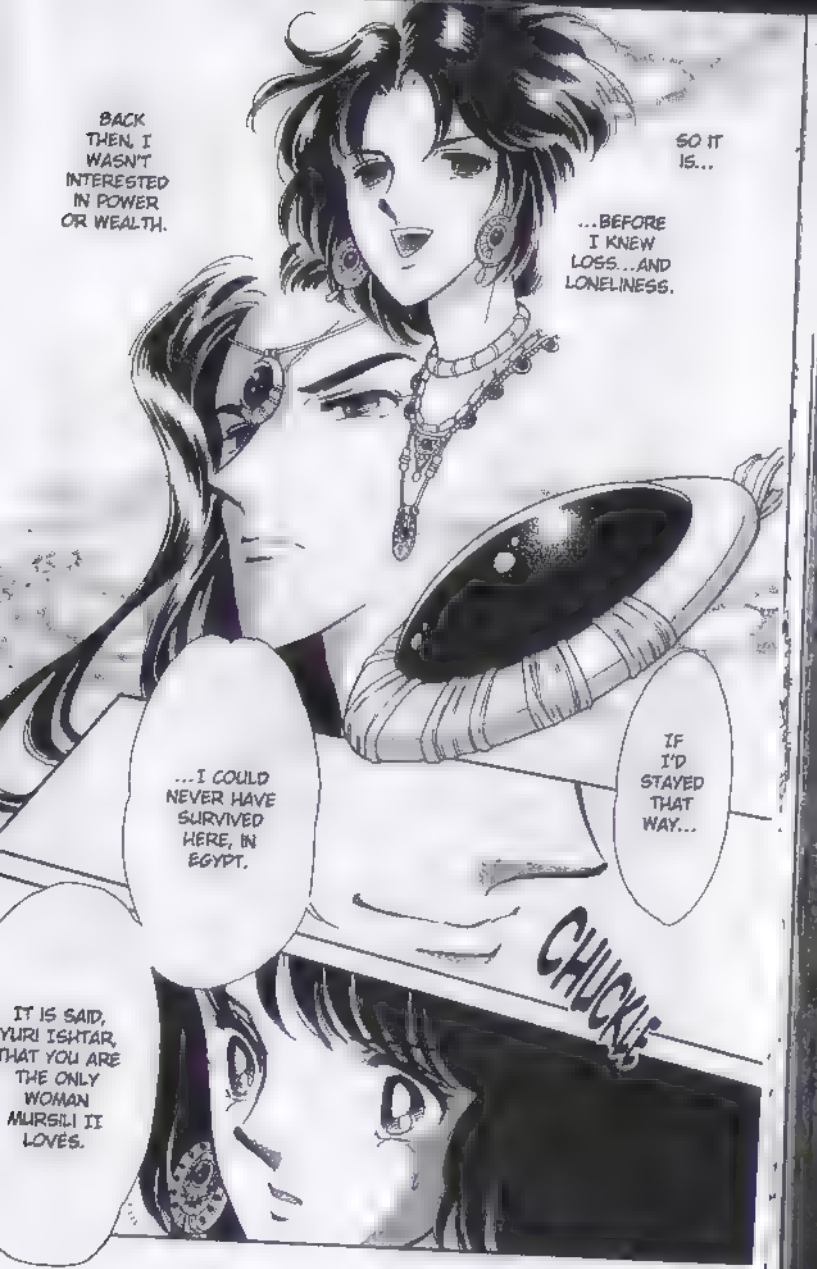

QUEEN NAKIA USED IT TO BRING ME HERE TO BE SACRIFICED AS PART OF HER EFFORT TO PLACE HER SON ON THE THRONE.
THEN ONE DAY...
...AT THE END OF THE 20TH CEN-TURY...
...I WAS SUDDENLY SUCKED INTO THIS ANCIENT WORLD BY A POWERFUL SPELL.

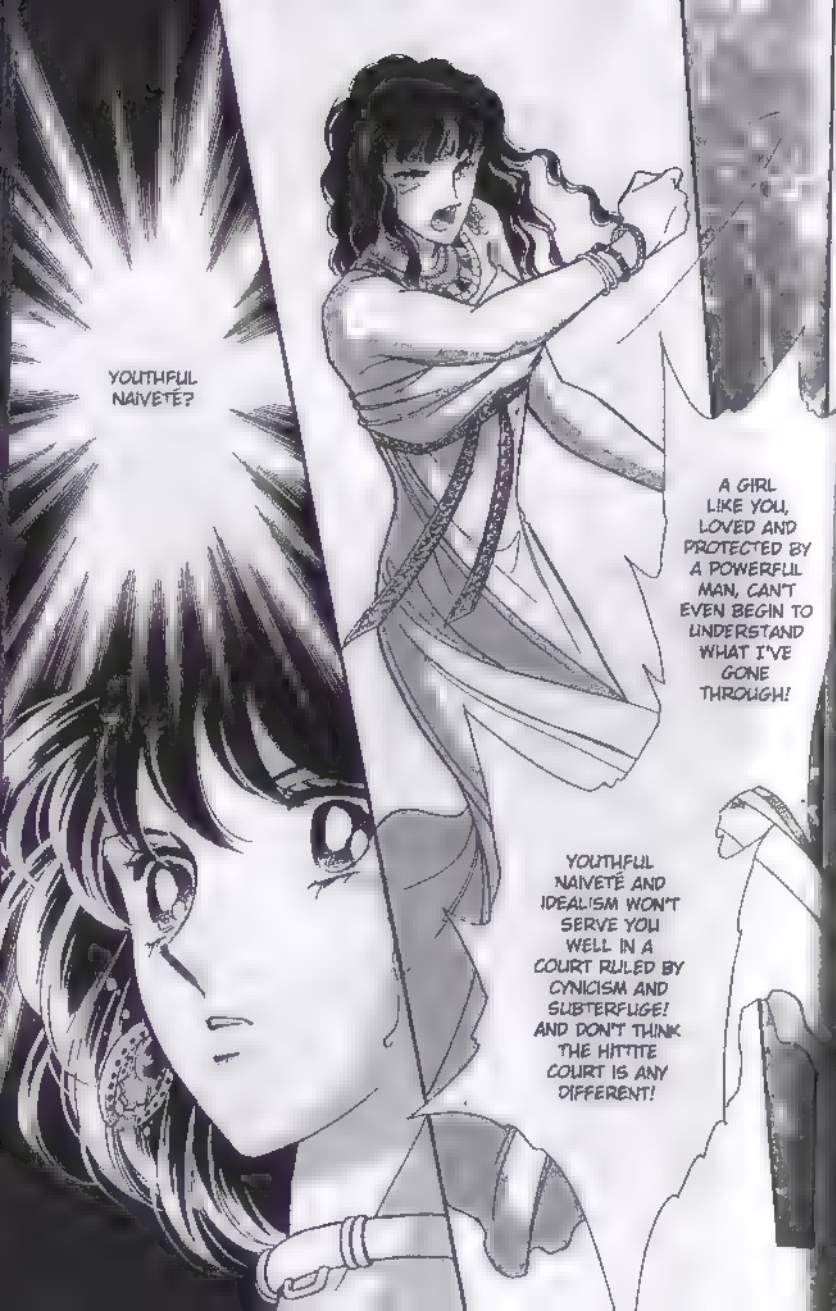

KARL SAVED ME THEN, AND MANY TIMES SINCE.
HOW COULD I EVER HAVE IMAGINED SUCH THINGS WOULD HAPPEN TO ME?
AND THEN HE AND I FELL IN LOVE.


...FACE-TO-FACE WITH EGYPT'S QUEEN DOWAGER NEFERTITI!
EVEN IN MY WILDEST DREAMS, I NEVER ENVISIONED THAT I WOULD BE STANDING HERE, IN THEBES...

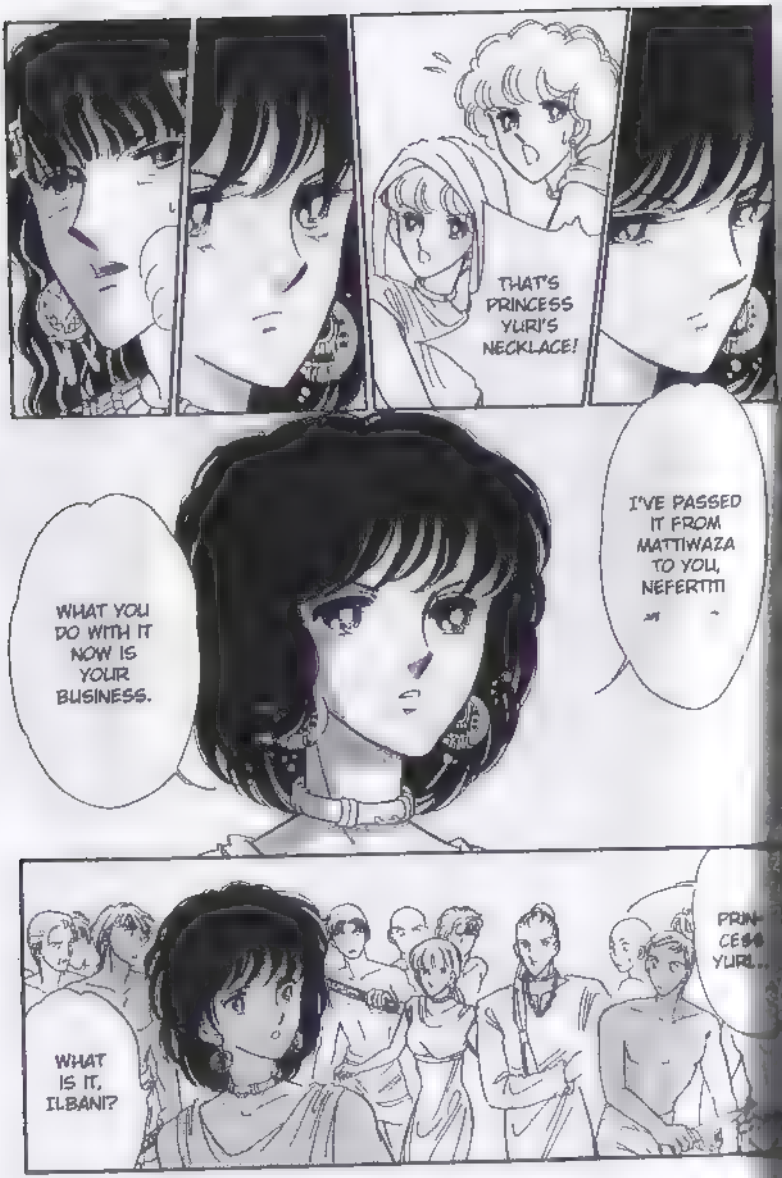
YOUR EXCELLENCY, I ASK YOU...
...PLEASE SET GENERAL RAMSES FREE!
AND LISTEN TO THE CRIES OF YOUR PEOPLE!
THAT'S ALL IT WILL TAKE TO END THIS REBELLION!
HMPH!
YOU! PRESUME TO SET TERMS, LITTLE GIRL?
NO ONE TELLS ME WHAT TO DO! NO ONE!
I AM THE QUEEN DOWAGER OF EGYPT!


AND THAT MAKES YOU HAPPY?
WHAT...?
IS POWER ALL THAT YOU CARED ABOUT WHEN YOU CAME TO EGYPT?
I DON'T THINK YOU CARED ABOUT IT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER BACK THEN!
THAT BLACK ONYX REPRESENTS WHAT YOU WERE BEFORE YOU SOURED!


BACK THEN, I WASN'T INTERESTED IN POWER OR WEALTH.
SO IT IS...
...BEFORE I KNEW LOSS...AND LONELINESS.
IF I'D STAYED THAT WAY...
...I COULD NEVER HAVE SURVIVED HERE, IN EGYPT.
CHUCKLE
IT IS SAID, YURI ISHTAR, THAT YOU ARE THE ONLY WOMAN MURSILI II LOVES.


YOUTHFUL NAIVETÉ?
A GIRL LIKE YOU, LOVED AND PROTECTED BY A POWERFUL MAN, CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT I'VE GONE THROUGH!
YOUTHFUL NAIVETÉ AND IDEALISM WON'T SERVE YOU WELL IN A COURT RULED BY CYNICISM AND SUBTERFUGE! AND DON'T THINK THE HITTITE COURT IS ANY DIFFERENT!

CRACK
I'VE NO IDEA WHAT THIS IS!
WUP

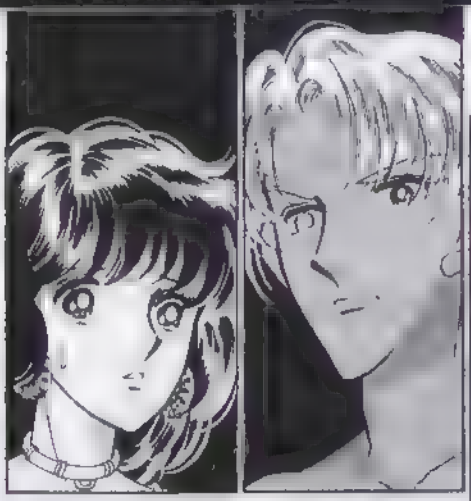

THAT'S PRINCESS YURI'S NECKLACE!
I'VE PASSED IT FROM MATTIWAZA TO YOU, NEFERTITI
WHAT YOU DO WITH IT NOW IS YOUR BUSINESS.
PRINCESS YURI...
WHAT IS IT, ILBANI?

WE'VE TAKEN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE PALACE.
YOUR EXCELLENCY, YOU MAY NOW CONSIDER YOURSELF IN OUR CUSTODY.
A GOOD DAY'S WORK, THEN.
WHAT?! DON'T YOU TOUCH ME!
RAMSES!
UNNH.

UNNH...
HE'S BADLY DEHYDRATED!
HANG IN THERE, RAMSES!
WATER, RYU!! QUICKLY!
BUSH
YES, MA'AM
GLUG

GULP
GULP
PHEW
BULSH
M-MORE...
OH. OF COURSE!
NOT WATER...
HEY!

SHOVE
YOU'VE HAD PLENTY!
NOW GET UP AND TAKE COMMAND OF YOUR TROOPS!
YOU BIG FAKER! YOU'RE FINE!
NO, ONLY MORE KISSES WILL GET ME BACK ON MY FEET.
YOU WON'T MIND IF I PUT A STOP TO IT?
IT WAS YOU WHO STARTED THIS INSURGENCY
IN FACT, COMING THIS FAR WAS NEVER MY INTENTION. I JUST MEANT TO SHAKE THINGS UP AND FORCE NEFERTITI'S HAND BUT SHE PROVED .. STUBBORN.
I'M NOT NAIVE ENOUGH TO IMAGINE WE CAN HOLD THEBES WITH THIS SMALL BAND OF REBELS



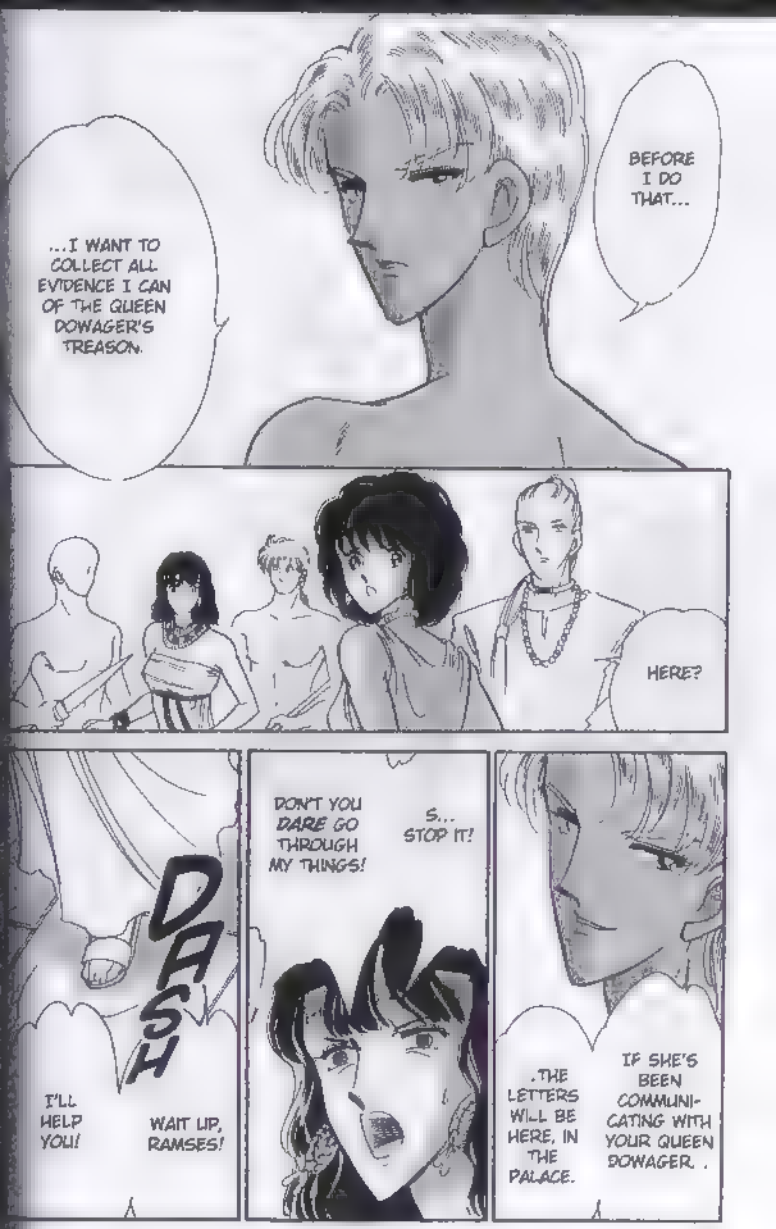
THANK YOU, RAMSES!
VERY WELL, I'LL..
. MEET WITH THEM. JUST DON'T EXPECT MIRACLES.

HOWEVER, THE REBELS' GRIEVANCES ARE MINE TOO.
THEY'VE RISEN UP AGAINST A CORRUPT REGIME WHOSE TIME IS OVER. THEY WANT A NEW EGYPT .. A BETTER EGYPT!
RAAH
ROAAR
IF YOU HEAR THEM OUT I THINK YOU'LL FIND YOU HAVE A LOT OF COMMON GROUND.

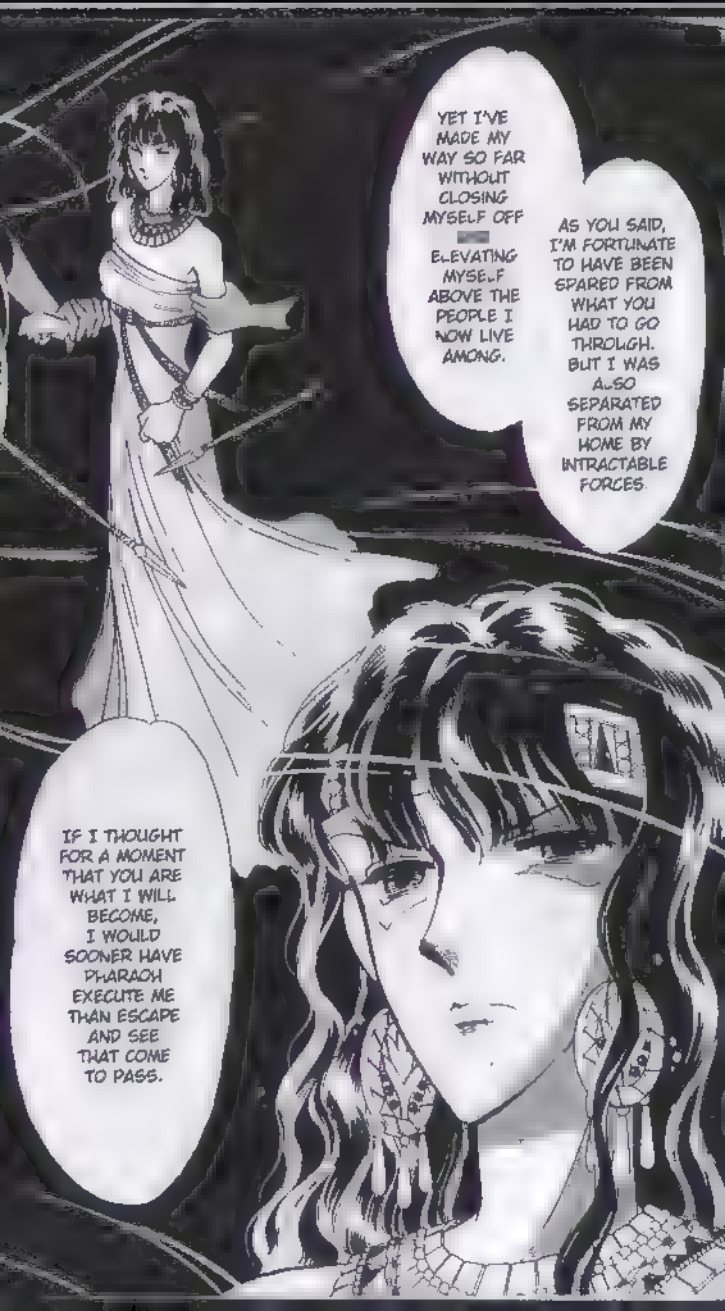
HO
HO
HO
!!

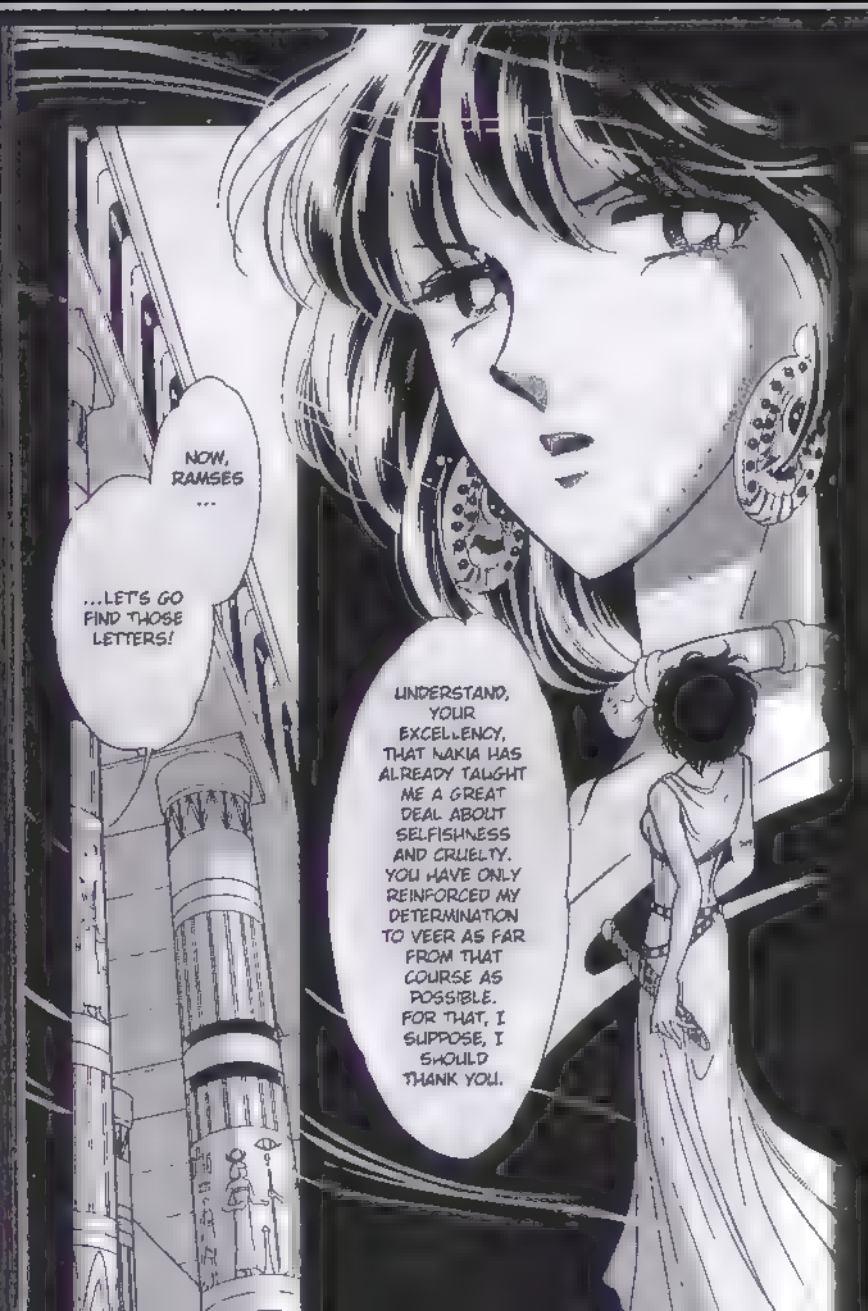
LITTLE GIRL, YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW THINGS REALLY WORK.
HO HO HO HO
THIS IS QUITE ABSURD!
IF YOU ARE TO EVENTUALLY TAKE PART IN RULING YOUR COUNTRY..
...YOU'LL SOON LEARN THAT HAVING GOOD INTENTIONS DOESN'T GET YOU VERY FAR!
PRINCESS YURI.
YOUR EXCELLENCY, I--!

YES, ILBANI?
PLEASE PREPARE FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.
YOU HAVE DISCLOSED OUR IDENTITIES, AND PHARAOH...
WE'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE LEAVING DURING THE PRESENT CHAOS, BUT THAT WON'T LAST LONG.
...WILL HAVE JUST CAUSE TO DECLARE US ENEMY INFILTRATORS.
RAMSES?
AREN'T YOU JOINING THE IMPERIAL FORCES?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?


BEFORE I DO THAT...
...I WANT TO COLLECT ALL EVIDENCE I CAN OF THE QUEEN DOWAGER'S TREASON.
HERE?
IF SHE'S BEEN COMMUNI-CATING WITH YOUR QUEEN DOWAGER. .
.THE LETTERS WILL BE HERE, IN THE PALACE.
S... STOP IT!
DON'T YOU DARE GO THROUGH MY THINGS!
DASH
WAIT UP, RAMSES!
I'LL HELP YOU!

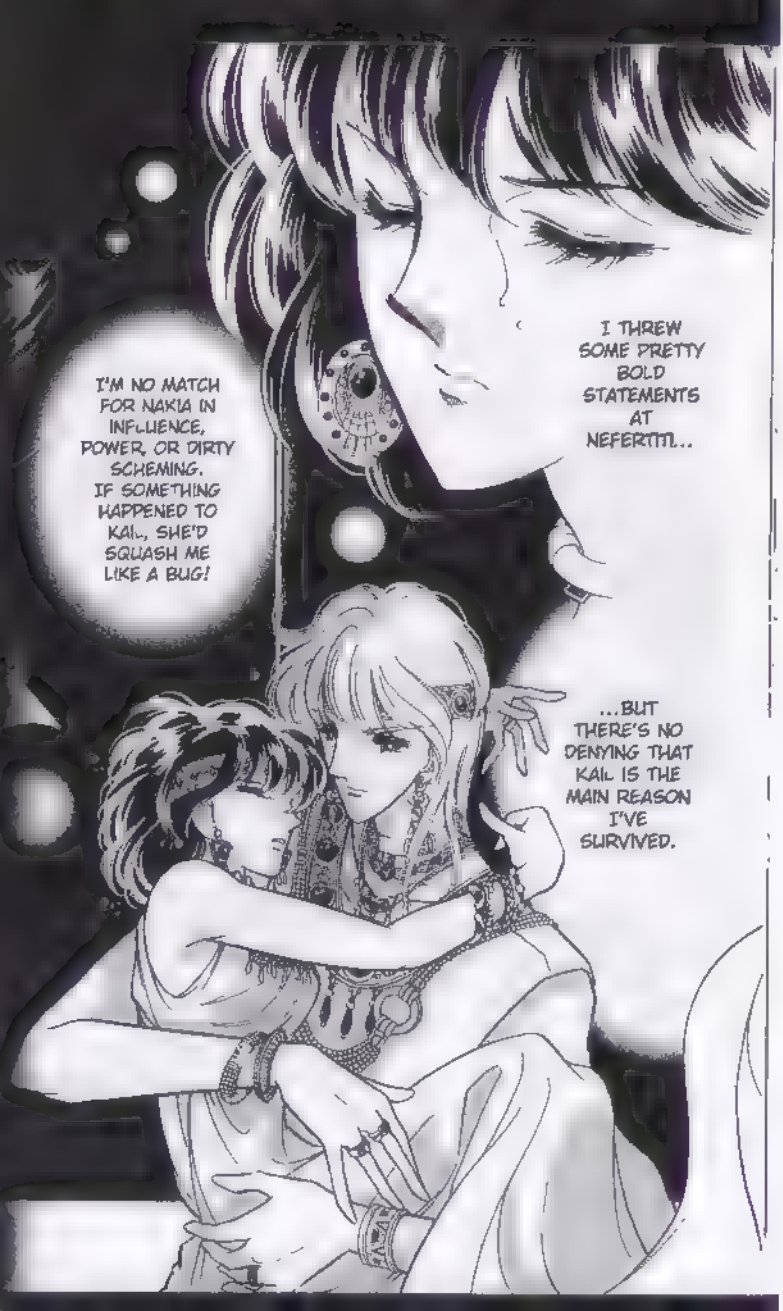
YOUR EXCEL-LENCY...
SOMEBODY, ARREST RAMSES! I COMMAND IT!
I WILL NOT ALLOW SUCH AN OUTRAGE!
PRINCESS YURI!
...IF YOU MIGHT HAVE GIVEN UP TOO SOON. IF SO, I FIND IT PUZZLING, BECAUSE YOU CLEARLY HAVE ENORMOUS STRENGTH OF WILL.
YOU CLAIM ONE CANNOT RULE A COUNTRY WITH IDEALISM AND GOOD INTENTIONS." MAYBE SO, BUT I WONDER..

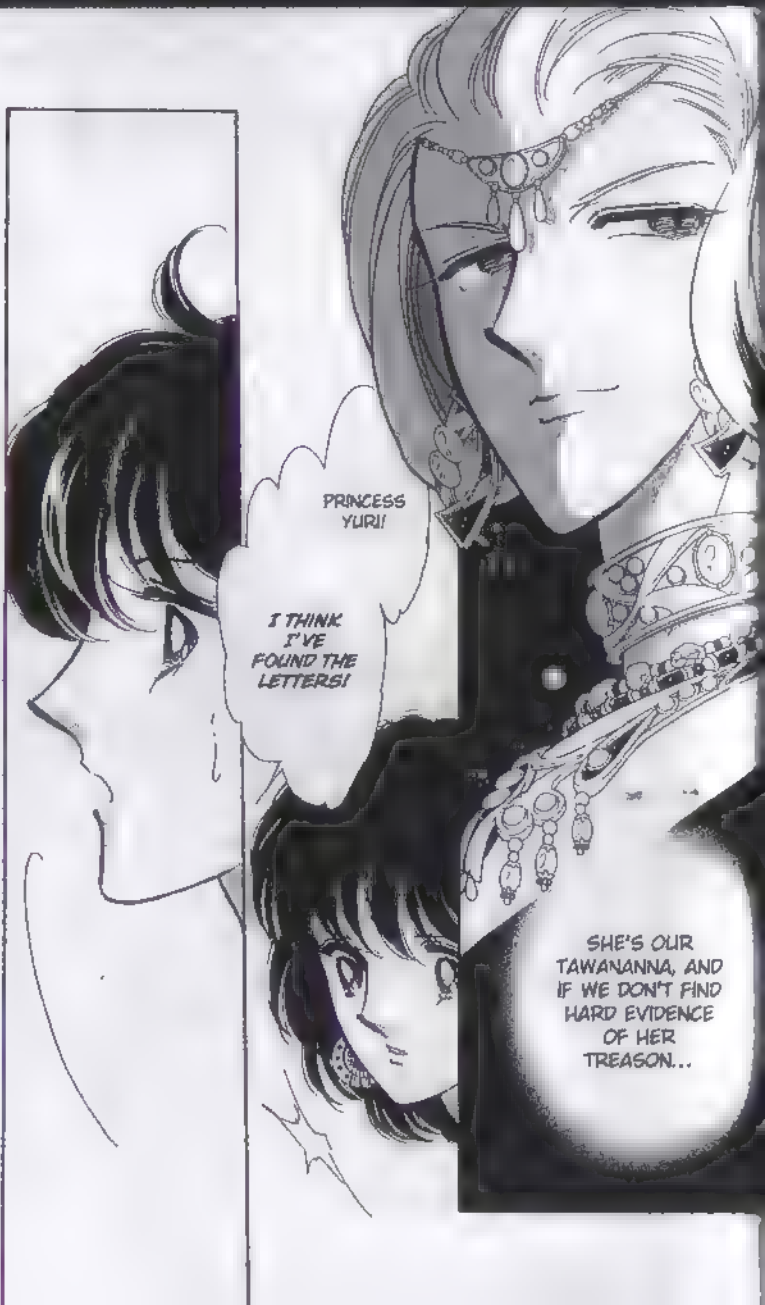

YET I'VE MADE MY WAY SO FAR WITHOUT CLOSING MYSELF OFF
ELEVATING MYSELF ABOVE THE PEOPLE I NOW LIVE AMONG.
AS YOU SAID, I'M FORTUNATE TO HAVE BEEN SPARED FROM WHAT YOU HAD TO GO THROUGH. BUT I WAS ALSO SEPARATED FROM MY HOME BY INTRACTABLE FORCES.
IF I THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT THAT YOU ARE WHAT I WILL BECOME, I WOULD SOONER HAVE PHARAOH EXECUTE ME THAN ESCAPE AND SEE THAT COME TO PASS.


NOW, RAMSES ...
...LET'S GO FIND THOSE LETTERS!
UNDERSTAND, YOUR EXCELLENCY, THAT NAKIA HAS ALREADY TAUGHT ME A GREAT DEAL ABOUT SELFISHNESS AND CRUELTY. YOU HAVE ONLY REINFORCED MY DETERMINATION TO VEER AS FAR FROM THAT COURSE AS POSSIBLE. FOR THAT, I SUPPOSE, I SHOULD THANK YOU.

ムニュル
ムニュル
ムニュル
...

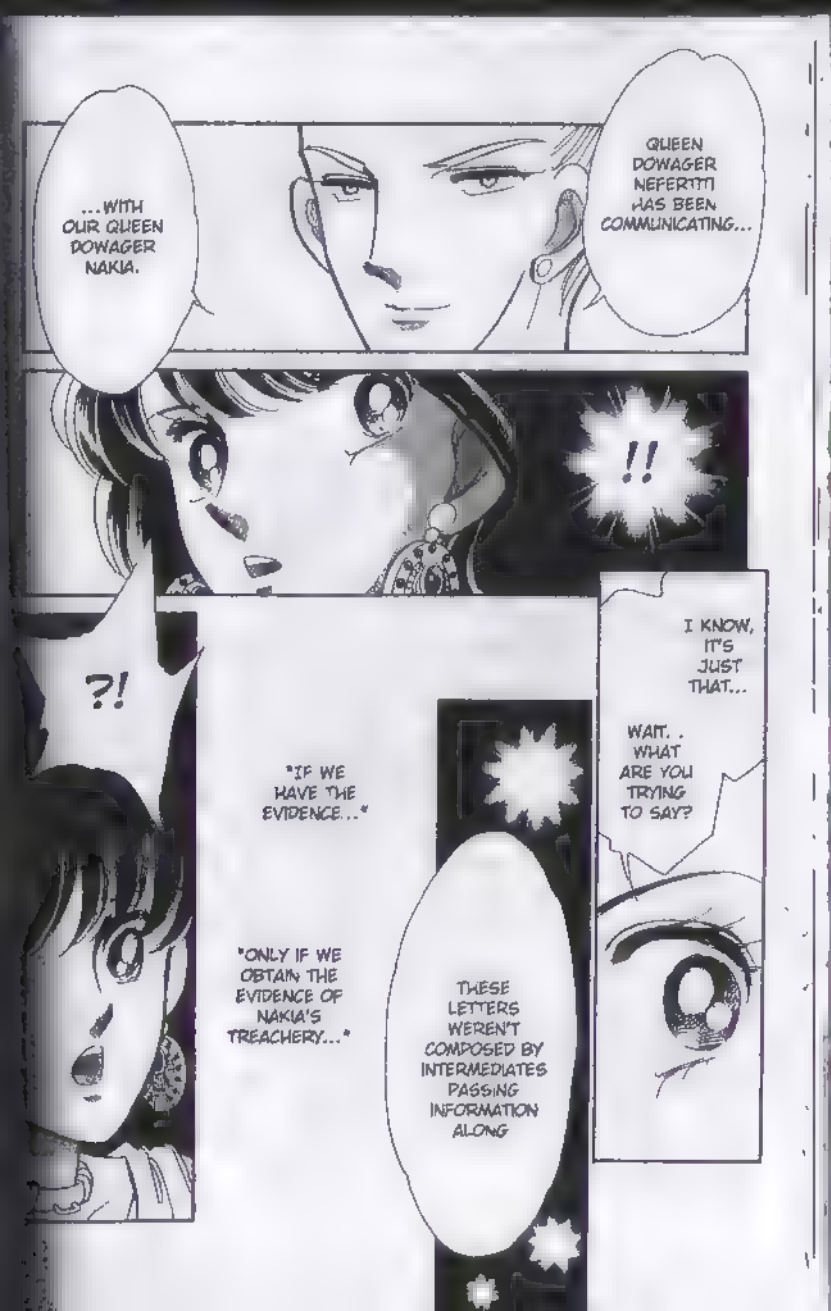
CHECK HER PARLOR AND HER BED CHAMBER! QUICKLY NOW!
SO I DOUBT SHE TOOK MUCH TROUBLE TO HIDE THE LETTERS!
NEFERTITI COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED ANYONE WOULD EVER SEARCH HER PALACE!

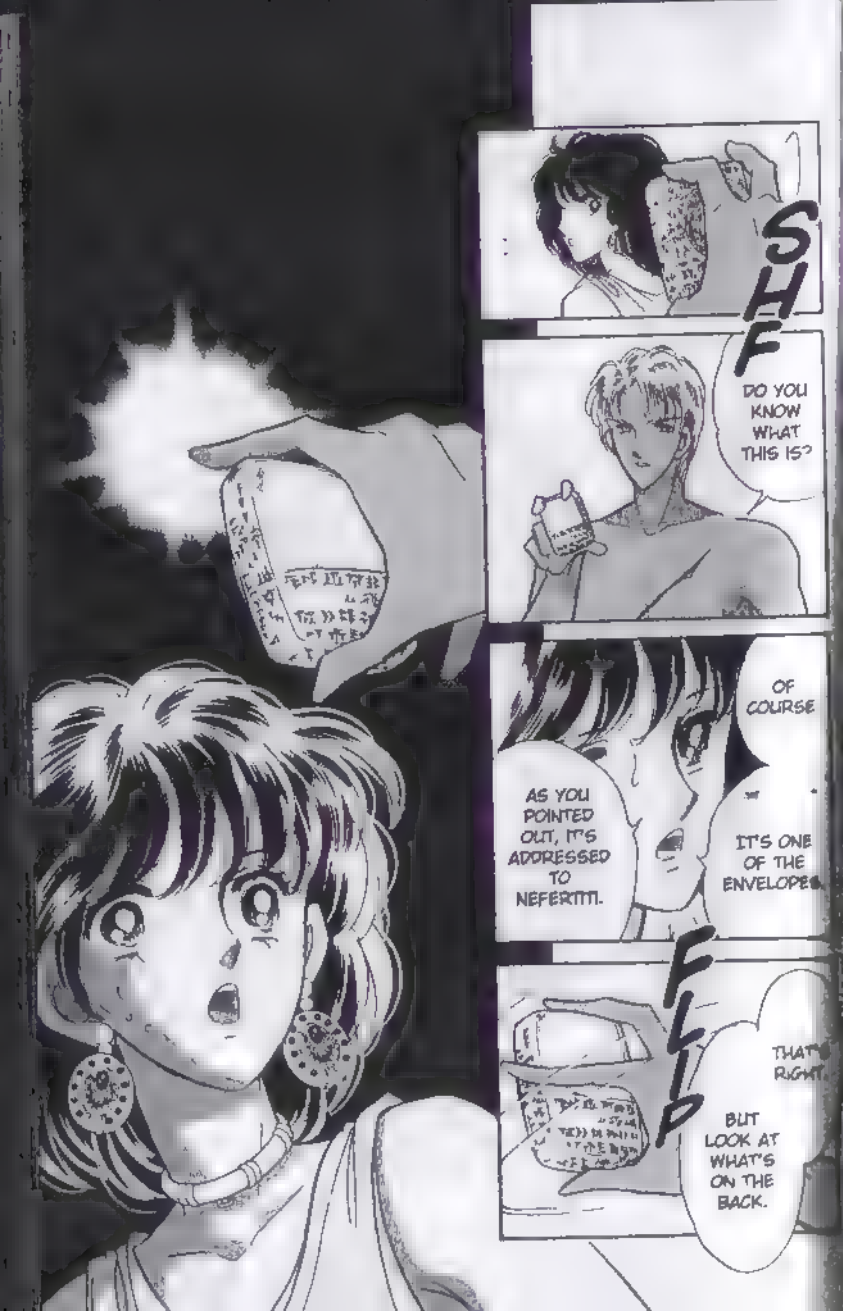

I THREW SOME PRETTY BOLD STATEMENTS AT NEFERTITI...
I'M NO MATCH FOR NAKIA IN INFLUENCE, POWER, OR DIRTY SCHEMING. IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO KAIL, SHE'D SQUASH ME LIKE A BUG!
...BUT THERE'S NO DENYING THAT KAIL IS THE MAIN REASON I'VE SURVIVED.

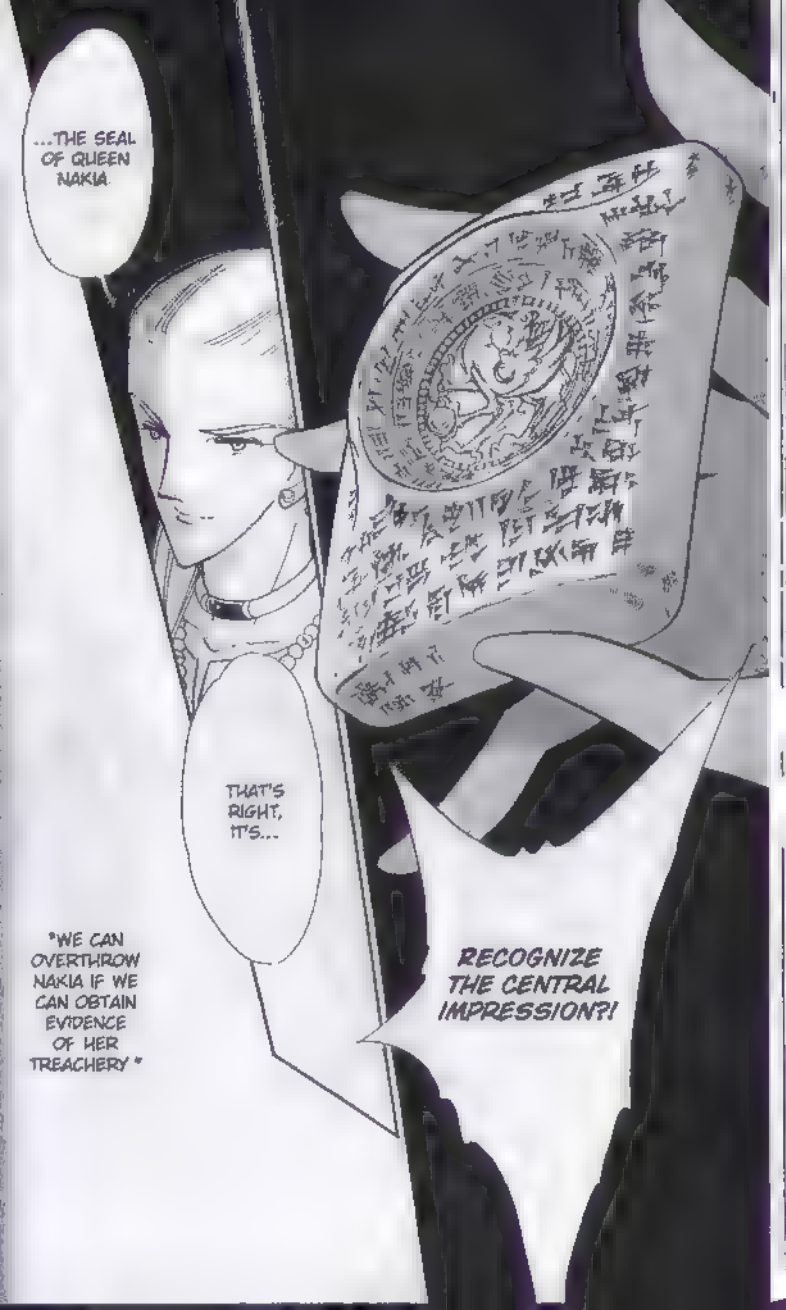

PRINCESS YURI!
I THINK I'VE FOUND THE LETTERS!
SHE'S OUR TAWANANNA, AND IF WE DON'T FIND HARD EVIDENCE OF HER TREASON...

A CHEST FILLED WITH CLAY TABLETS!
ARE YOU SURE, HADI?!
PRETTY SURE LOOK!
SHE'S RIGHT!
THESE ARE LETTERS SENT TO NEFERTITI FROM THE HITTITE EMPIRE!
RIGHT THERE THAT'S NEFERTITI'S ADDRESS!

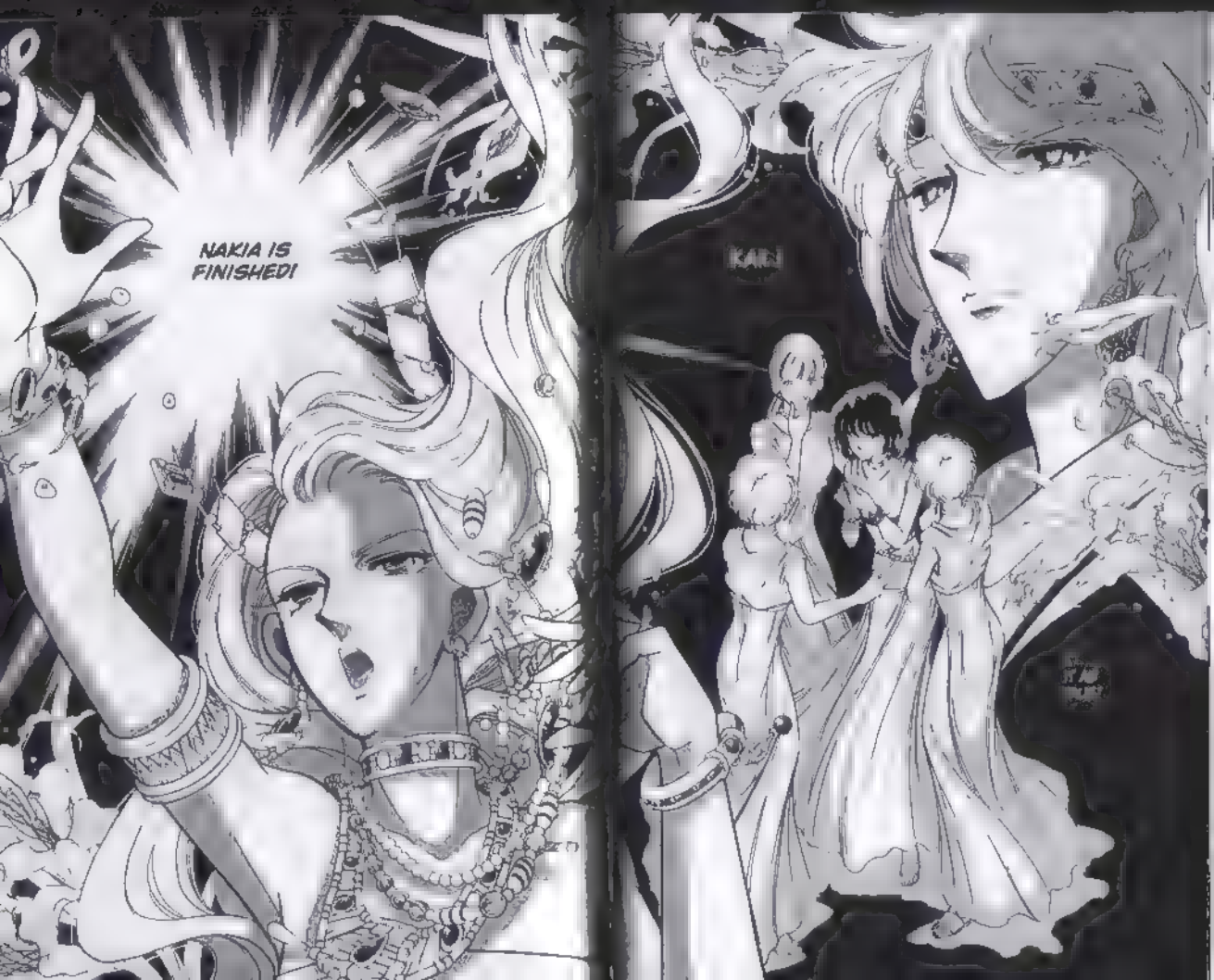
INDEED IT IS.
SO THAT'S THE EVIDENCE YOU NEED TO OUST HER?
SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN CAREFUL TO COVER HER TRACKS...
ALL WELL AND GOOD FOR EGYPT, BUT IT DOES NOTHING ABOUT NAKIA.
...DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THIS MEANS?
HUH?
PRINCESS YURI..

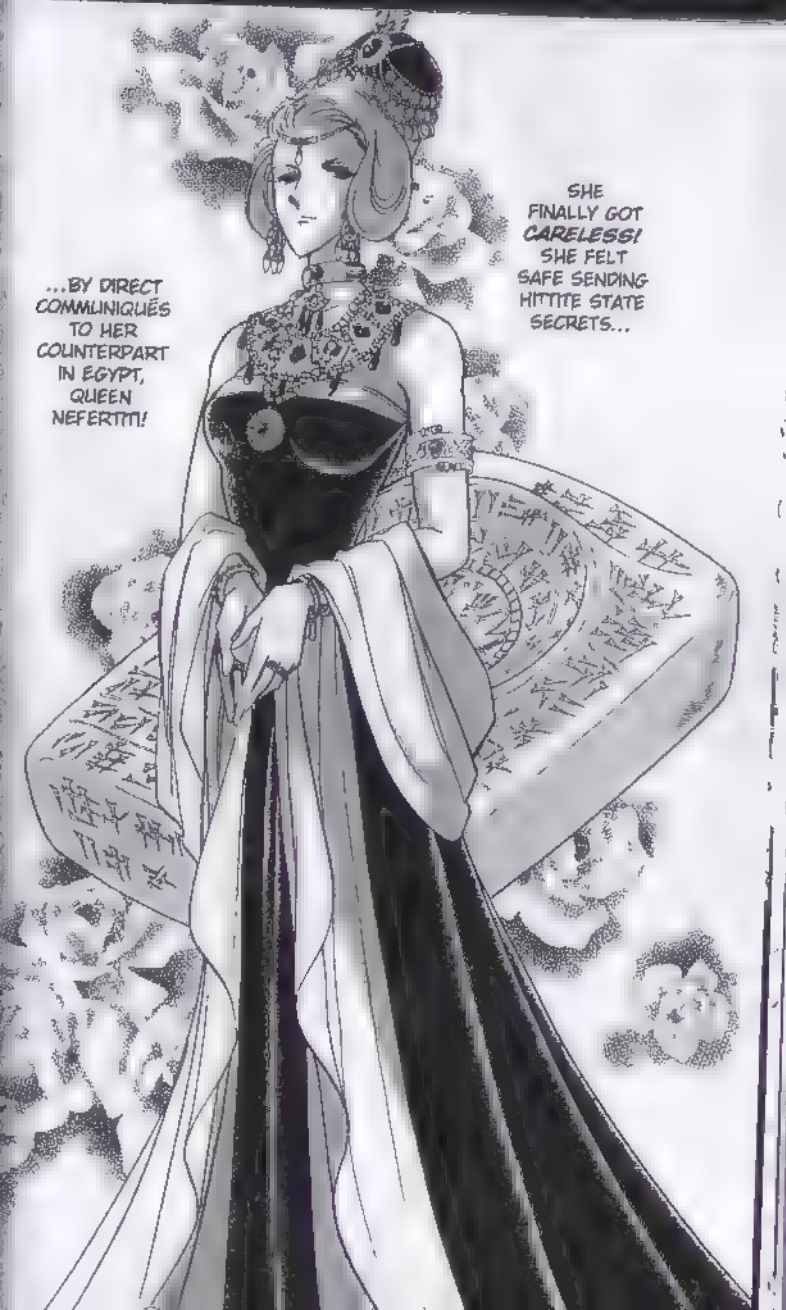

QUEEN DOWAGER NEFERTITI HAS BEEN COMMUNICATING...
...WITH OUR QUEEN DOWAGER NAKIA.
!!
I KNOW, IT'S JUST THAT...
WAIT. . WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
?!
"IF WE HAVE THE EVIDENCE..."
"ONLY IF WE OBTAIN THE EVIDENCE OF NAKIA'S TREACHERY..."
THESE LETTERS WEREN'T COMPOSED BY INTERMEDIATES PASSING INFORMATION ALONG

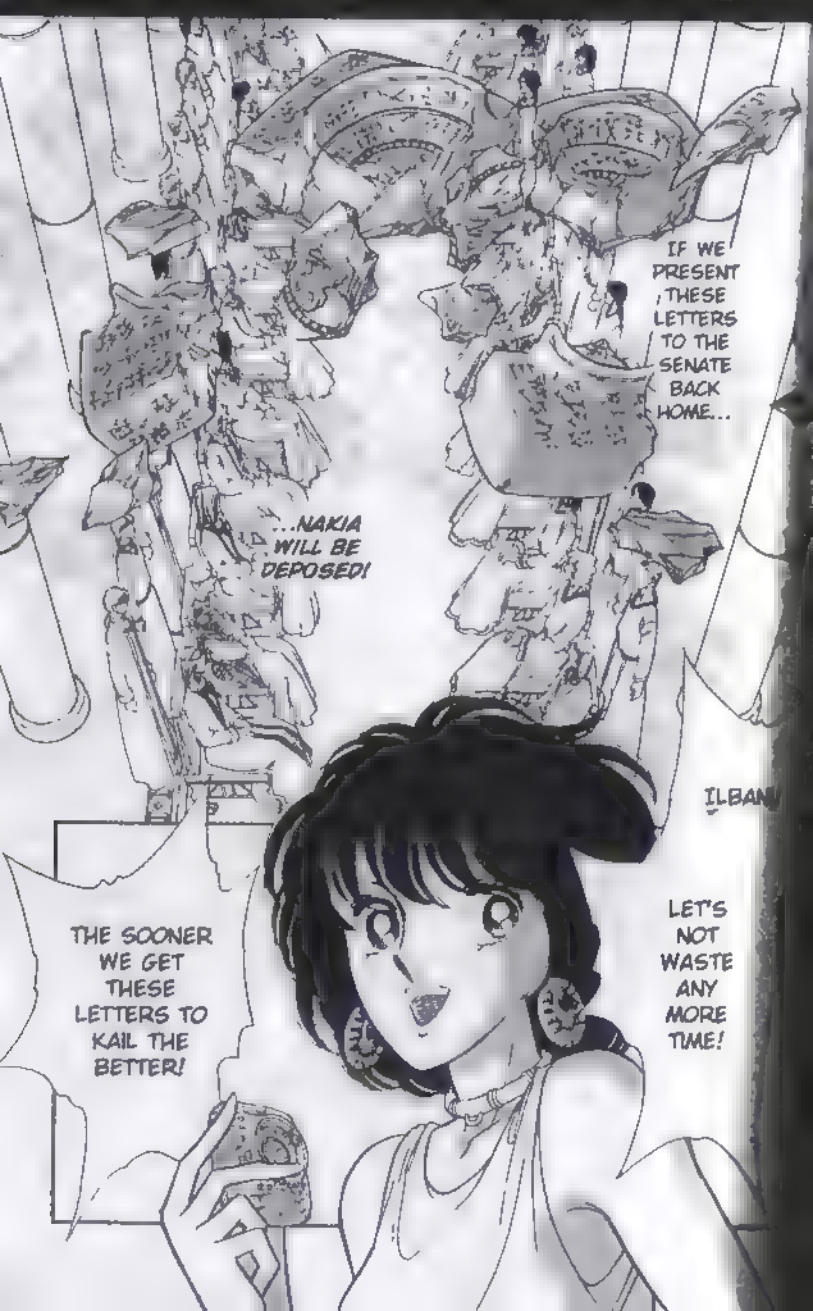

SHF
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS?
OF COURSE
IT'S ONE OF THE ENVELOPES.
AS YOU POINTED OUT, IT'S ADDRESSED TO NEFERTITI.
FLIP
THAT'S RIGHT.
BUT LOOK AT WHAT'S ON THE BACK.

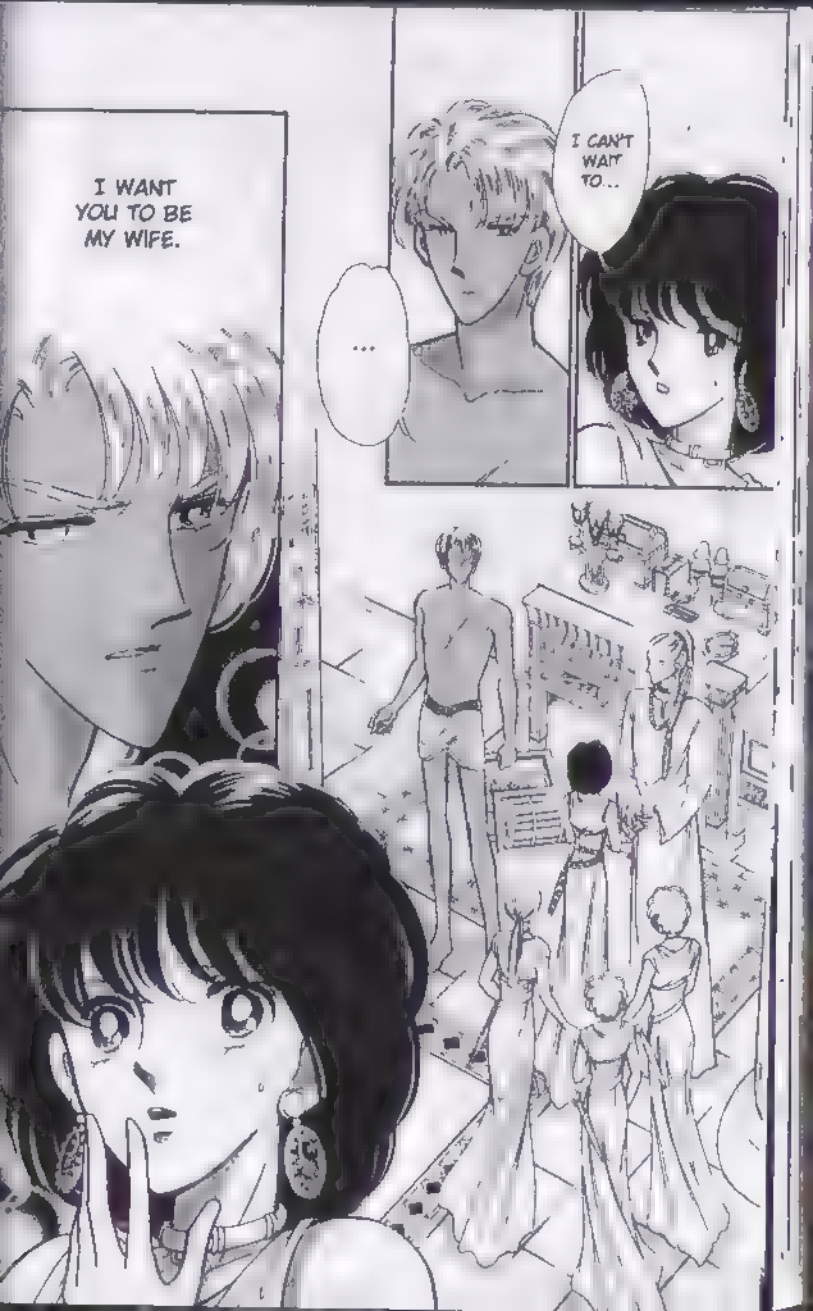

...THE SEAL OF QUEEN NAKIA
THAT'S RIGHT, IT'S...
"WE CAN OVERTHROW NAKIA IF WE CAN OBTAIN EVIDENCE OF HER TREACHERY."
RECOGNIZE THE CENTRAL IMPRESSION?!

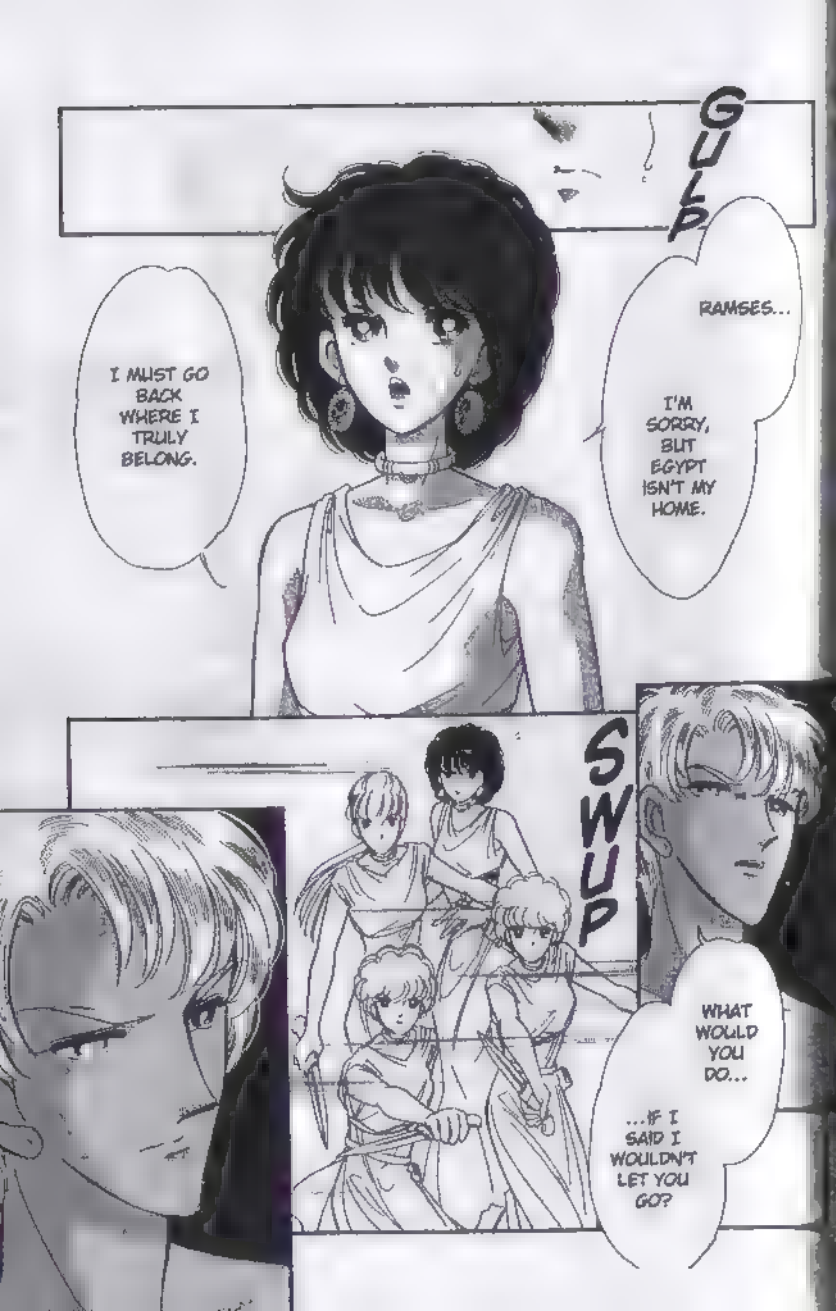
DO WE FINALLY HAVE HER DEAD TO RIGHTS?!
OH MY GOD... IS IT TRUE...?

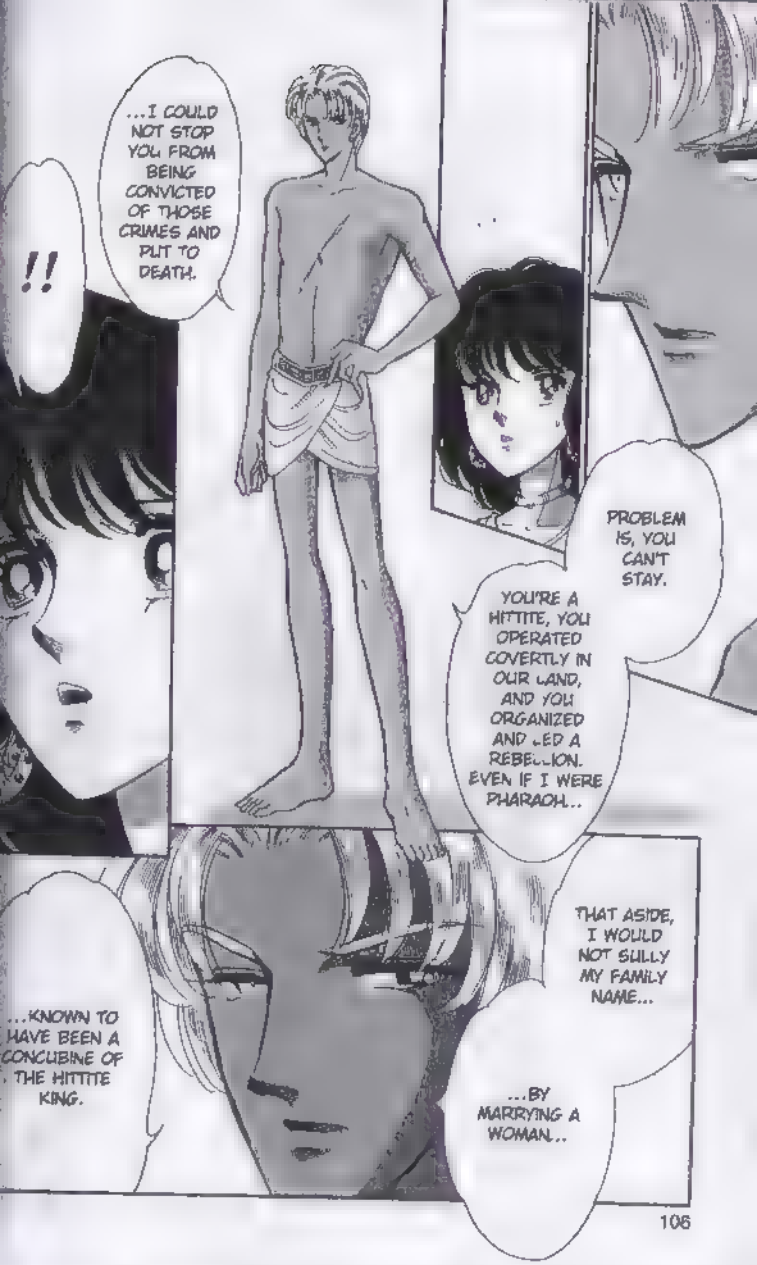

NAKIA IS FINISHED!
KAEL


...BY DIRECT COMMUNIQUÉS TO HER COUNTERPART IN EGYPT, QUEEN NEFERTITI!
SHE FINALLY GOT *CARELESS!* SHE FELT SAFE SENDING HITTITE STATE SECRETS...

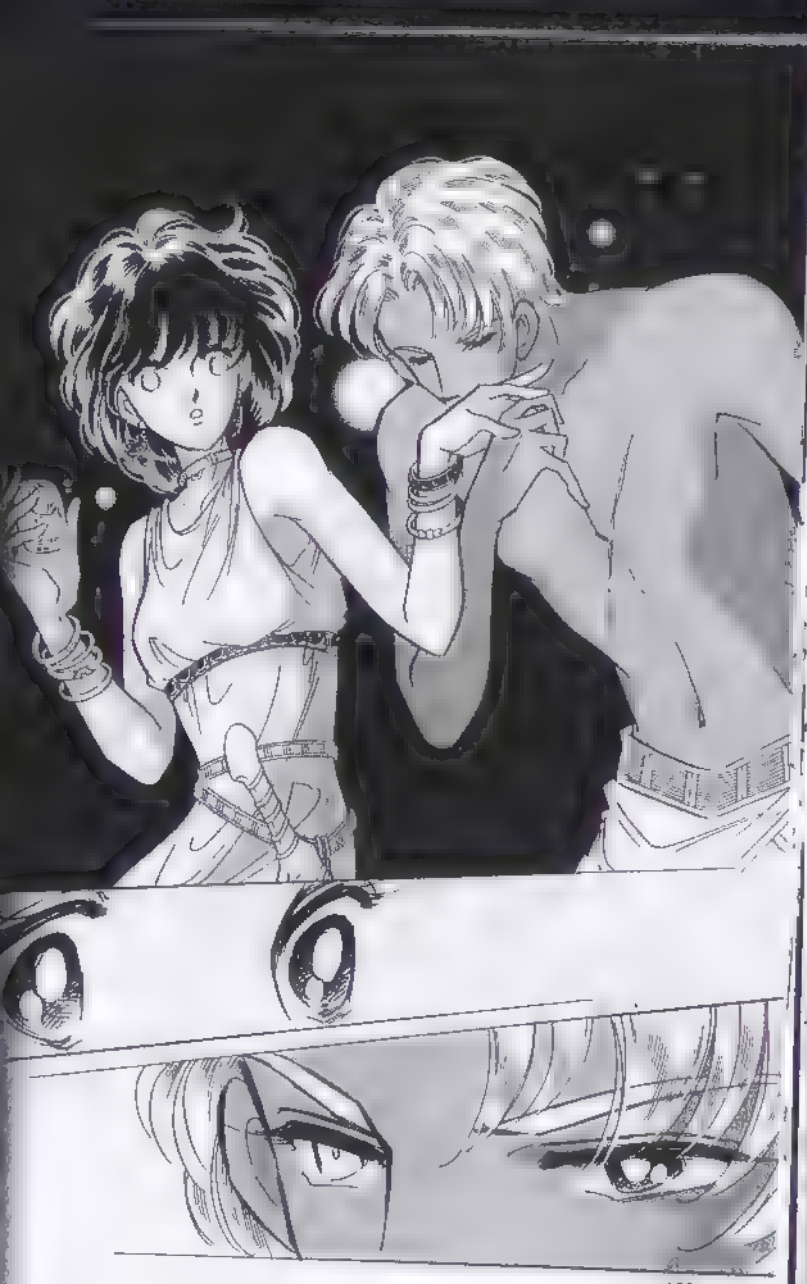

IF WE PRESENT THESE LETTERS TO THE SENATE BACK HOME...
...NAKIA WILL BE DEPOSED!
ILBANI
THE SOONER WE GET THESE LETTERS TO KAIL THE BETTER!
LET'S NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME!

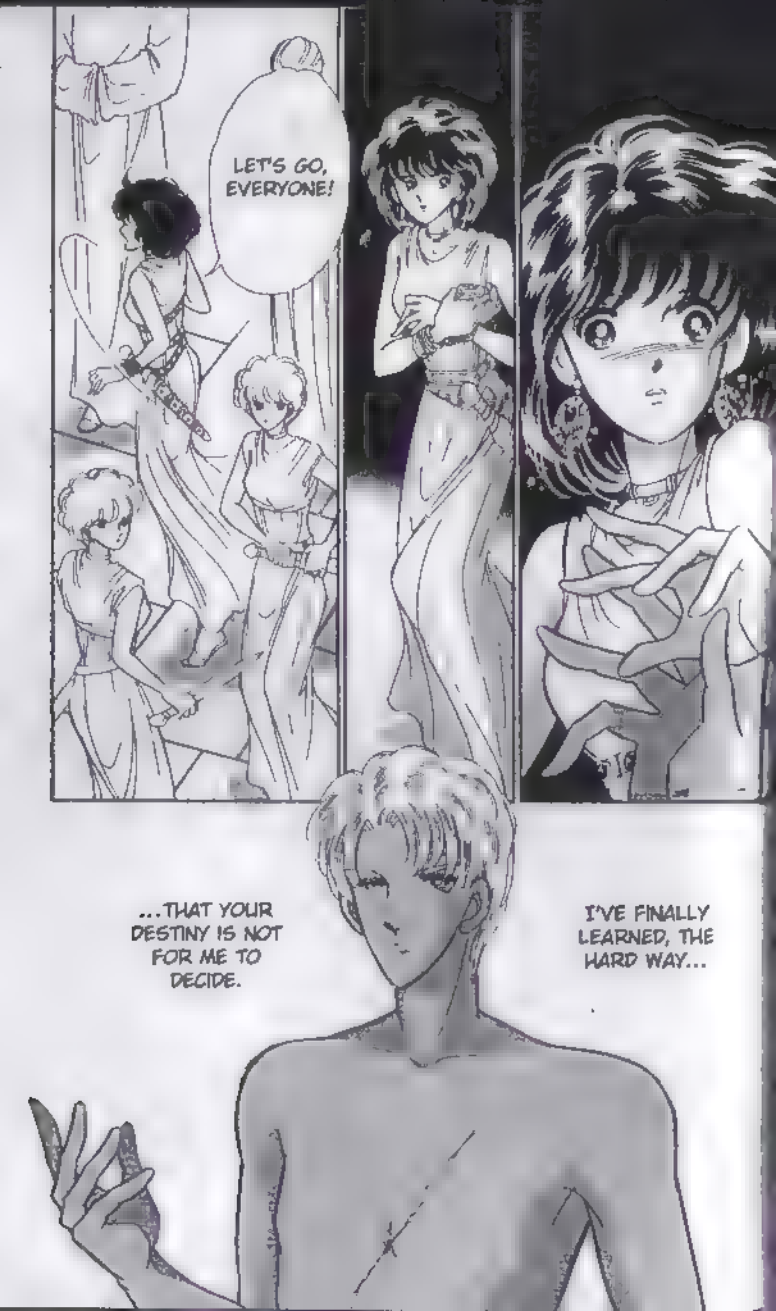

I WANT YOU TO BE MY WIFE.
...
I CAN'T WAIT TO...


GULP
RAMSES...
I'M SORRY, BUT EGYPT ISN'T MY HOME.
I MUST GO BACK WHERE I TRULY BELONG.
SWUP
WHAT WOULD YOU DO...
...IF I SAID I WOULDN'T LET YOU GO?

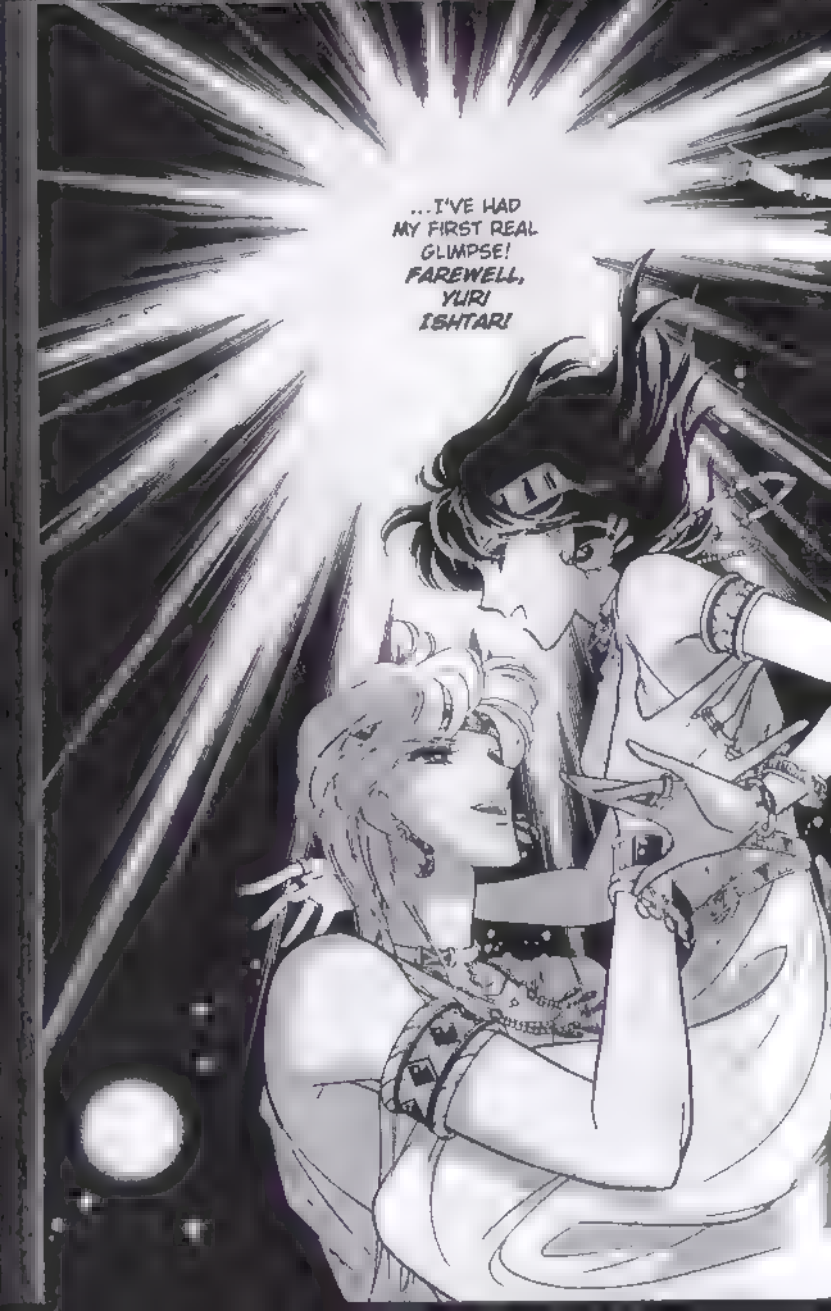

...I COULD NOT STOP YOU FROM BEING CONVICTED OF THOSE CRIMES AND PUT TO DEATH.
!!
PROBLEM IS, YOU CAN'T STAY.
YOU'RE A HITTITE, YOU OPERATED COVERTLY IN OUR LAND, AND YOU ORGANIZED AND LED A REBELLION. EVEN IF I WERE PHARAOH...
THAT ASIDE, I WOULD NOT SULLY MY FAMILY NAME...
...BY MARRYING A WOMAN...
...KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN A CONCUBINE OF THE HITTITE KING.

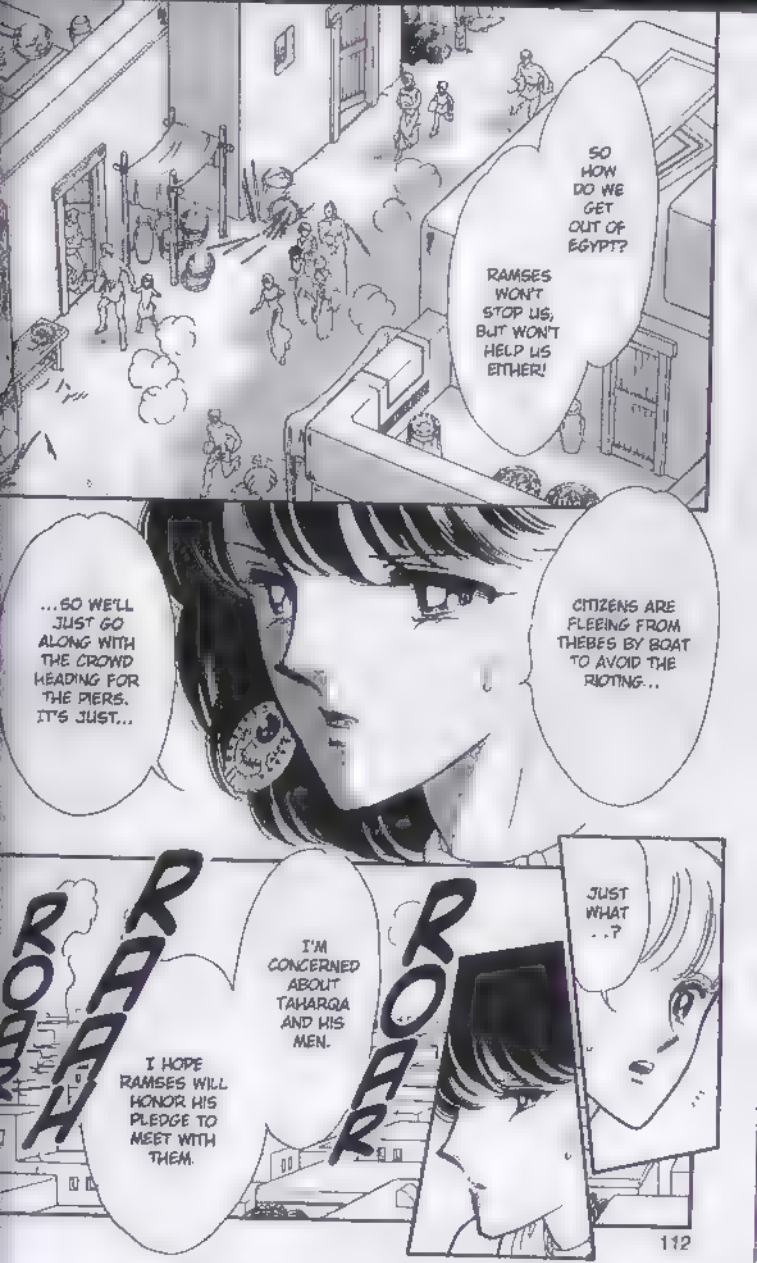
SO... WE'RE FREE TO GO?
I HAVE AN UPRISING TO DEAL WITH.
AND I'LL BE QUITE OCCUPIED WITH MOPPING UP AFTER-WARDS.
I'LL JUST TAKE SOME OF THESE LETTERS WITH ME!
THANK YOU, RAMSES!
?!

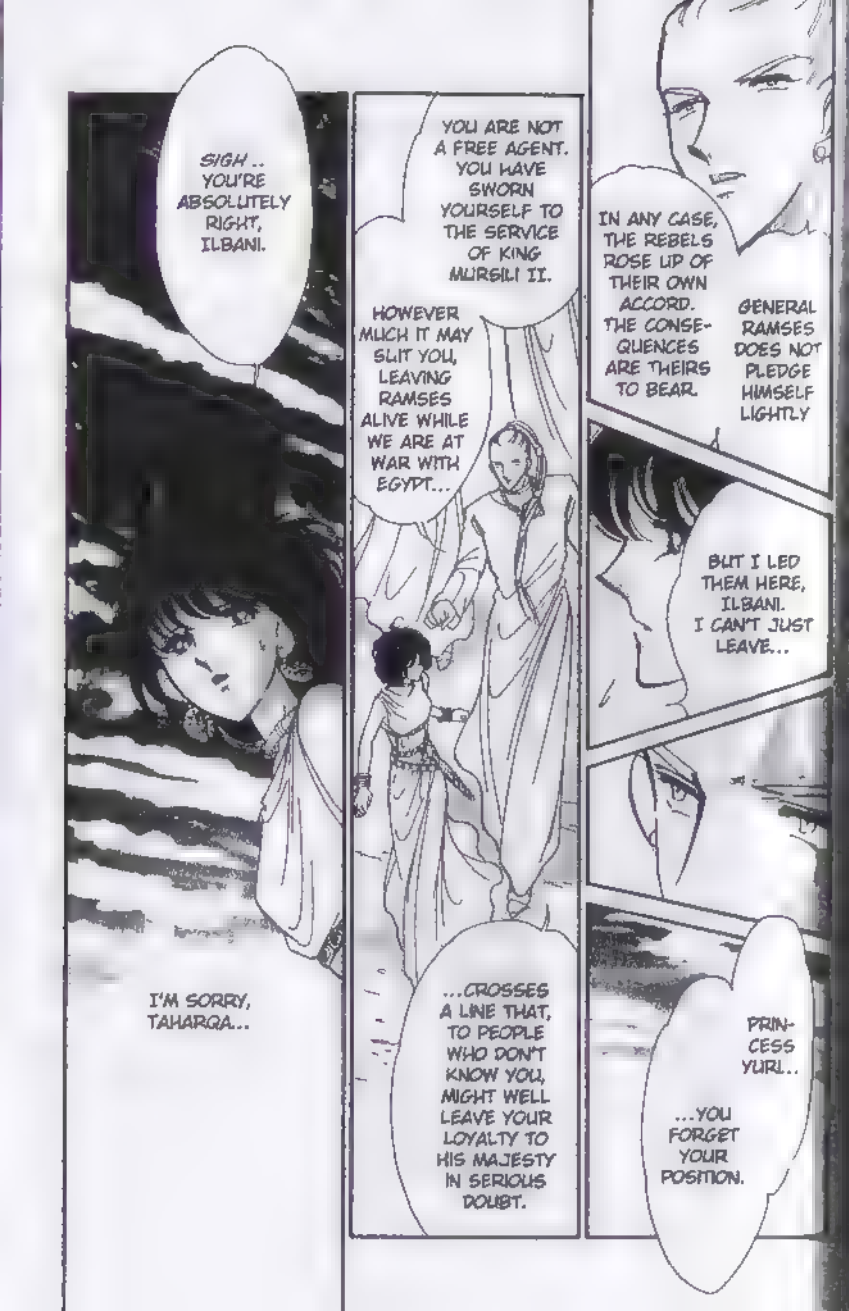



LET'S GO, EVERYONE!
...THAT YOUR DESTINY IS NOT FOR ME TO DECIDE.
I'VE FINALLY LEARNED, THE HARD WAY...

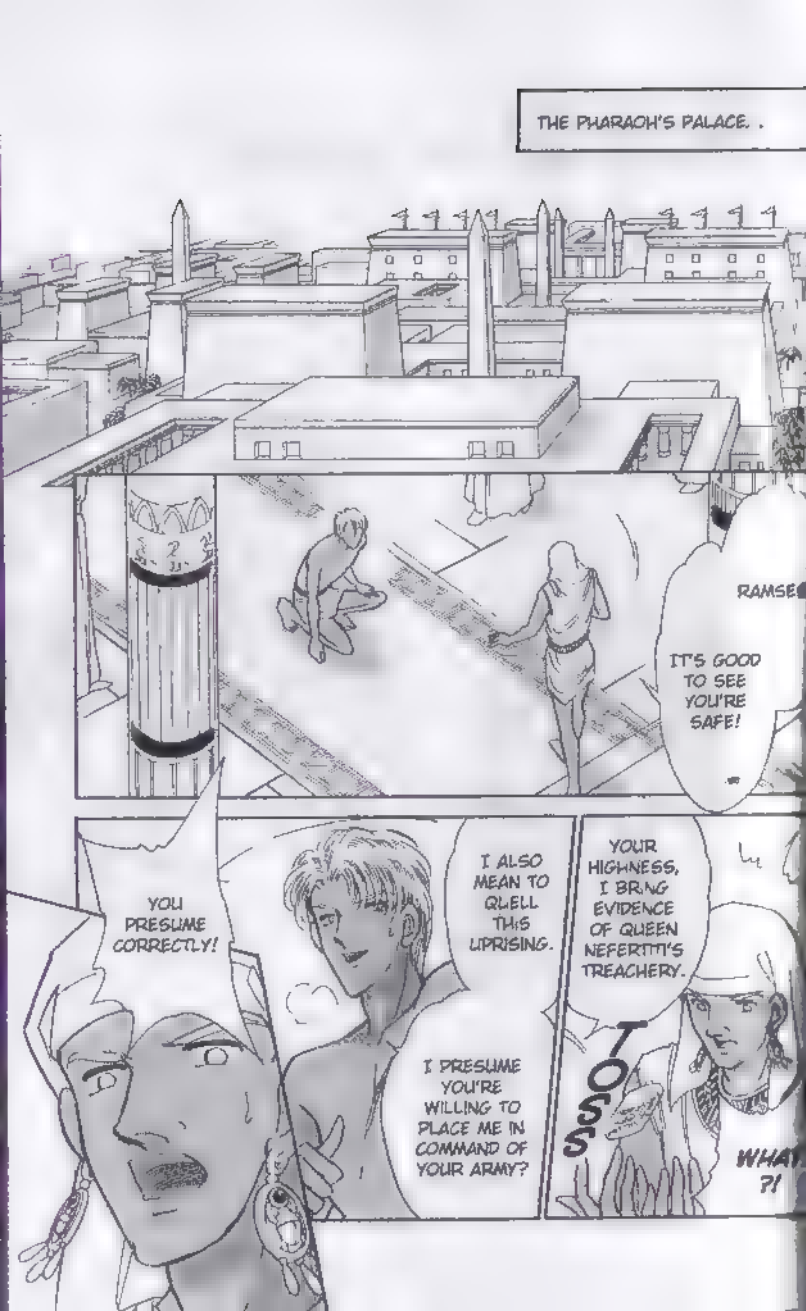
I WOULD HAVE DARED ANYTHING TO HAVE YOU.
BUT YOUR AIDE RUSAFA ONCE ASKED WHAT KIND OF MAN I SAW MYSELF BECOMING.
AND NOW I THINK

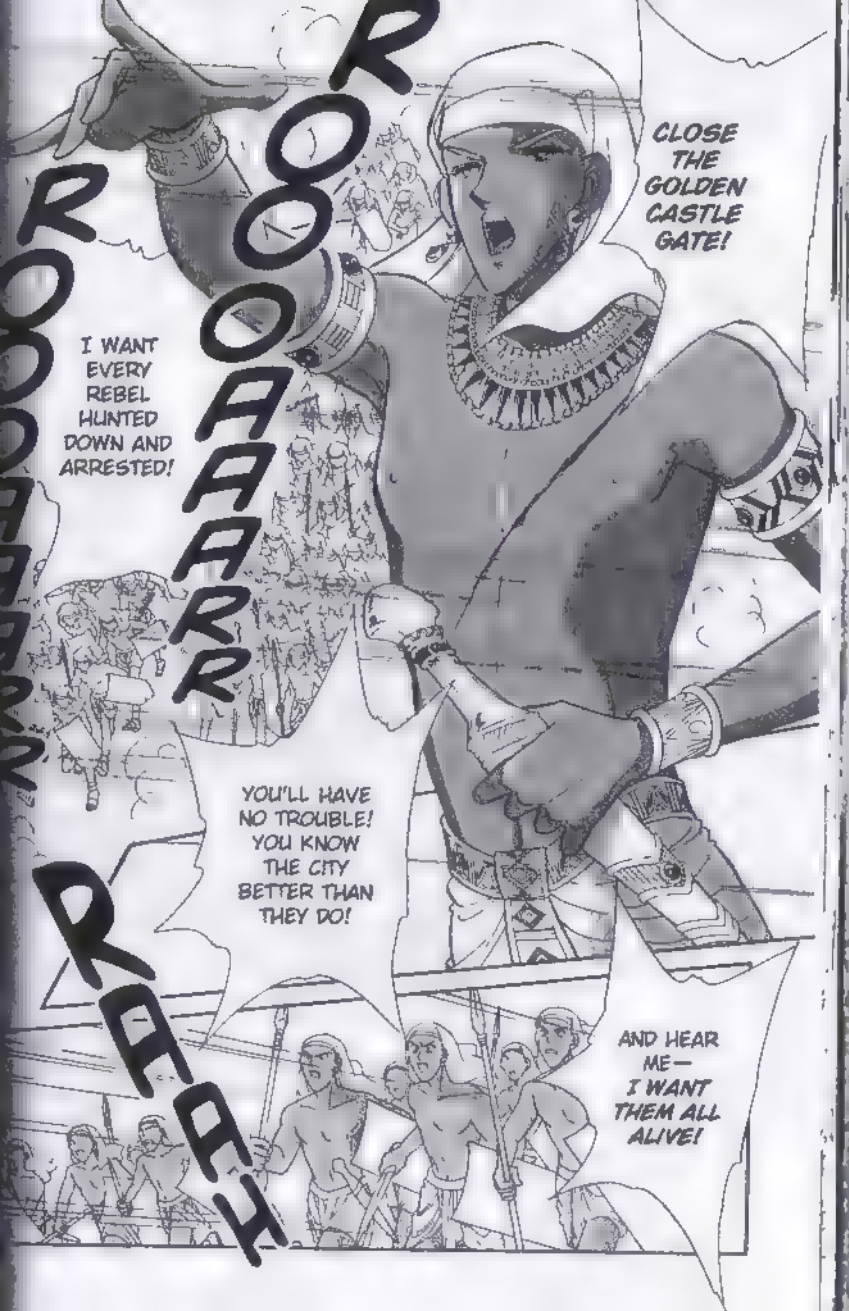

...I'VE HAD
MY FIRST REAL
GLIMPSE!
FAREWELL,
YURI
ISHTAR!


SO HOW DO WE GET OUT OF EGYPT?
RAMSES WON'T STOP US, BUT WON'T HELP US EITHER!
CITIZENS ARE FLEEING FROM THEBES BY BOAT TO AVOID THE RIOTING...
...SO WE'LL JUST GO ALONG WITH THE CROWD HEADING FOR THE PIERS. IT'S JUST...
JUST WHAT...?
ROAR
ROAAH
I'M CONCERNED ABOUT TAHARQA AND HIS MEN.
I HOPE RAMSES WILL HONOR HIS PLEDGE TO MEET WITH THEM.
ROAR


PRIN-CESS YURI..
...YOU FORGET YOUR POSITION.
BUT I LED THEM HERE, ILBANI. I CAN'T JUST LEAVE...
GENERAL RAMSES DOES NOT PLEDGE HIMSELF LIGHTLY
IN ANY CASE, THE REBELS ROSE UP OF THEIR OWN ACCORD. THE CONSE-QUENCES ARE THEIRS TO BEAR.
YOU ARE NOT A FREE AGENT. YOU HAVE SWORN YOURSELF TO THE SERVICE OF KING MURSILI II.
HOWEVER MUCH IT MAY SUIT YOU, LEAVING RAMSES ALIVE WHILE WE ARE AT WAR WITH EGYPT...
...CROSSES A LINE THAT, TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T KNOW YOU, MIGHT WELL LEAVE YOUR LOYALTY TO HIS MAJESTY IN SERIOUS DOUBT.
SIGH .. YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT, ILBANI.
I'M SORRY, TAHARQA...

I THINK I SAW PRINCESS YURI AND HER AIDES BOARDING A BOAT.
HEY, TAHARQA!
YEAH?
YOU'RE SEEING THINGS.
PRINCESS YURI IS OUR LEADER. SHE HELPED US TAKE THEBES.
SHE WOULD NEVER ABANDON US, ESPECIALLY AT THE MOMENT OF OUR GREATEST TRIUMPH!


THE PHARAOH'S PALACE. .
RAMSE
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU'RE SAFE!
YOUR HIGHNESS, I BRING EVIDENCE OF QUEEN NEFERTITI'S TREACHERY.
TOSS
WHAT ?!
I ALSO MEAN TO QUELL THIS UPRISING.
I PRESUME YOU'RE WILLING TO PLACE ME IN COMMAND OF YOUR ARMY?
YOU PRESUME CORRECTLY!

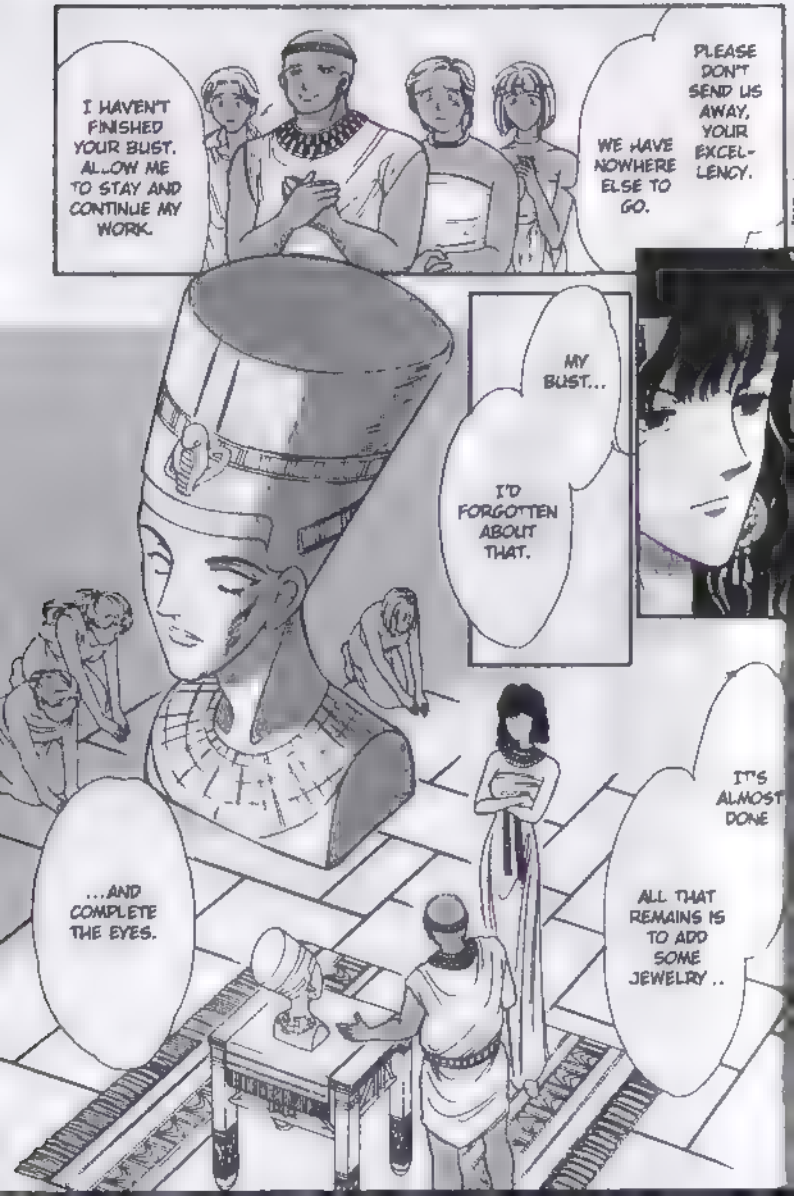

ROOOAARR
ROOOAARR
ROOOAARR
CLOSE THE GOLDEN CASTLE GATE!
I WANT EVERY REBEL HUNTED DOWN AND ARRESTED!
YOU'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE! YOU KNOW THE CITY BETTER THAN THEY DO!
AND HEAR ME— I WANT THEM ALL ALIVE!

TAHARQA! DAG'S UNIT TO THE NORTH HAS BEEN ROUNDED UP BY IMPERIAL TROOPS!
SETTI'S UNIT TO THE WEST, TOO!
WELL, WE KNEW WE WOULDN'T HAVE THE UPPER HAND FOR LONG!
SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE'S FINALLY TAKEN EFFECTIVE COMMAND OF THE PHARAOH'S FORCES.
WHERE IS PRINCESS YURI? WE NEED TO FIND OUT...
...WHAT SHE WANTS US TO DO AT THIS POINT!
RAAAH
ROOAAARRR
RAHH
RAHH

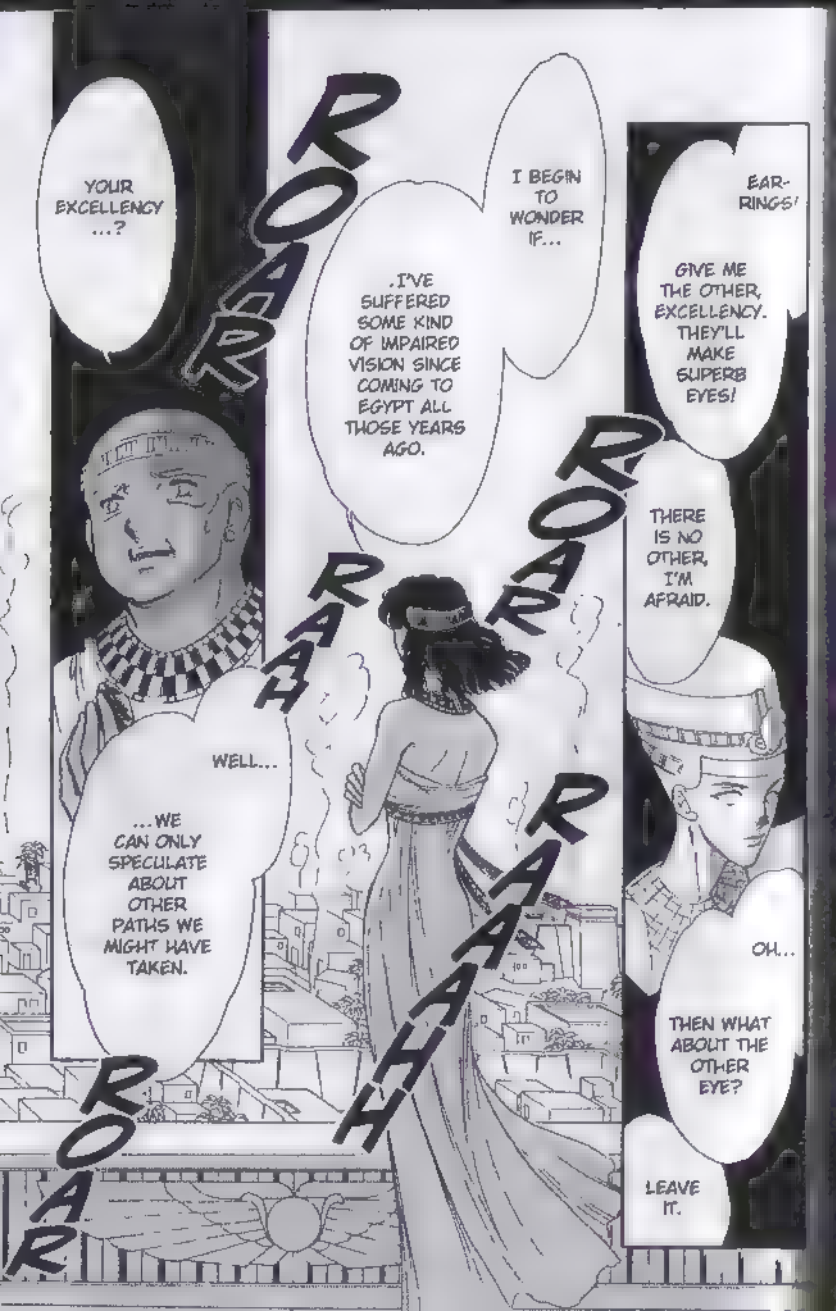
YOUR EXCELLENCY, I COME...
...WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE PHARAOH ON A VERY GRAVE MATTER.
HIS HIGHNESS HAS RECEIVED EVIDENCE OF YOUR SECRET COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE HITTITE EMPIRE.
HE HAS ORDERED THAT YOU BE PLACED UNDER ARREST AND YOUR AUTHORITY AS QUEEN DOWAGER SUSPENDED.
YOU WILL BE CONFINED TO YOUR PALACE UNDER IMPERIAL GUARD UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
DO AS YOU WILL.

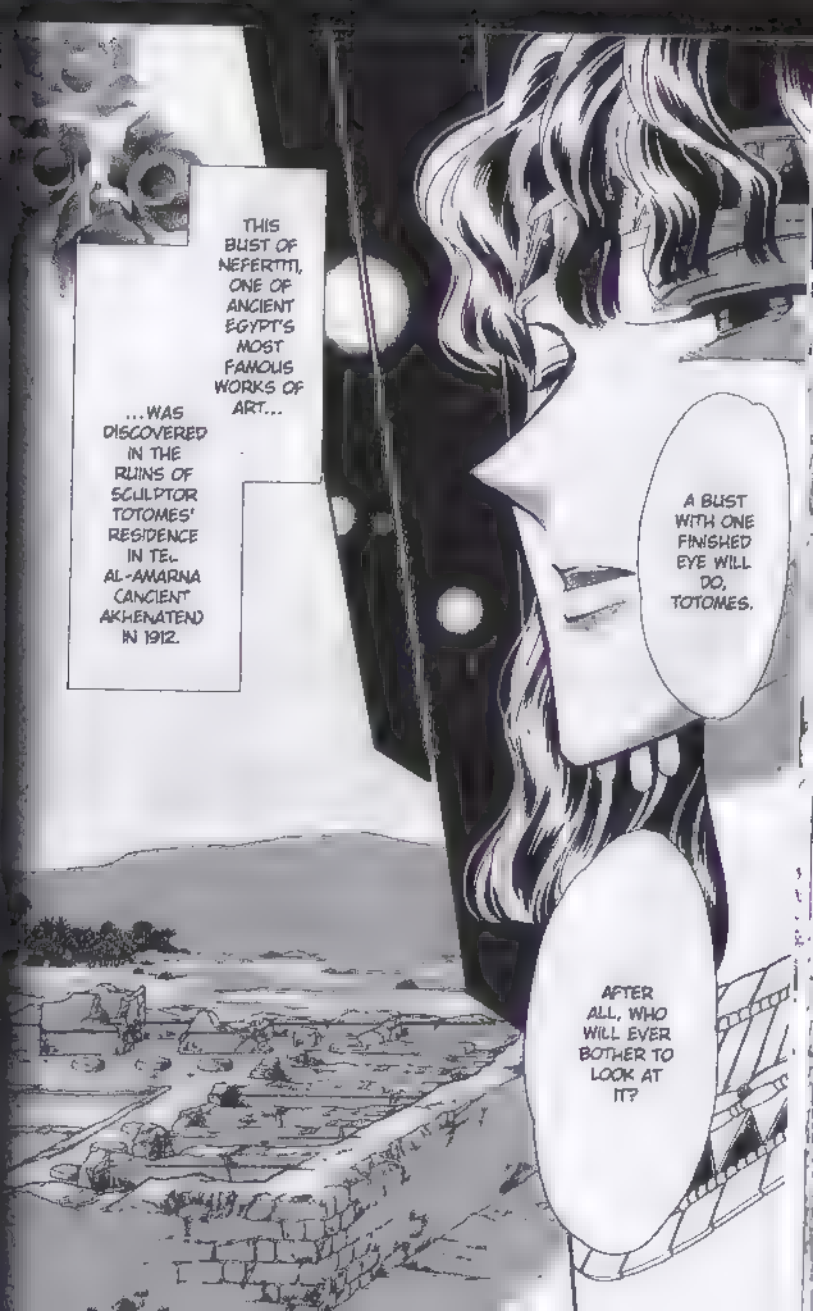
HMPH!
LIKE RATS ABANDONING A SINKING SHIP!
THERE'S NO BENEFIT TO STAYING WITH ME ANY LONGER.
DON'T YOU WANT TO JOIN THOSE RATS?

YOU SHOULD GRAB WHAT VALUABLES YOU CAN AND LEAVE!
EH? WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
I KNEW FROM THE VERY BEGINNING THAT I WOULD PAY A VERY HIGH PRICE IF I EVER LOST THE POWER GAME.
I WON'T BE AT ALL SURPRISED IF THEY DECIDE TO INCARCERATE ME IN THE PALACE OF AKHENATEN.

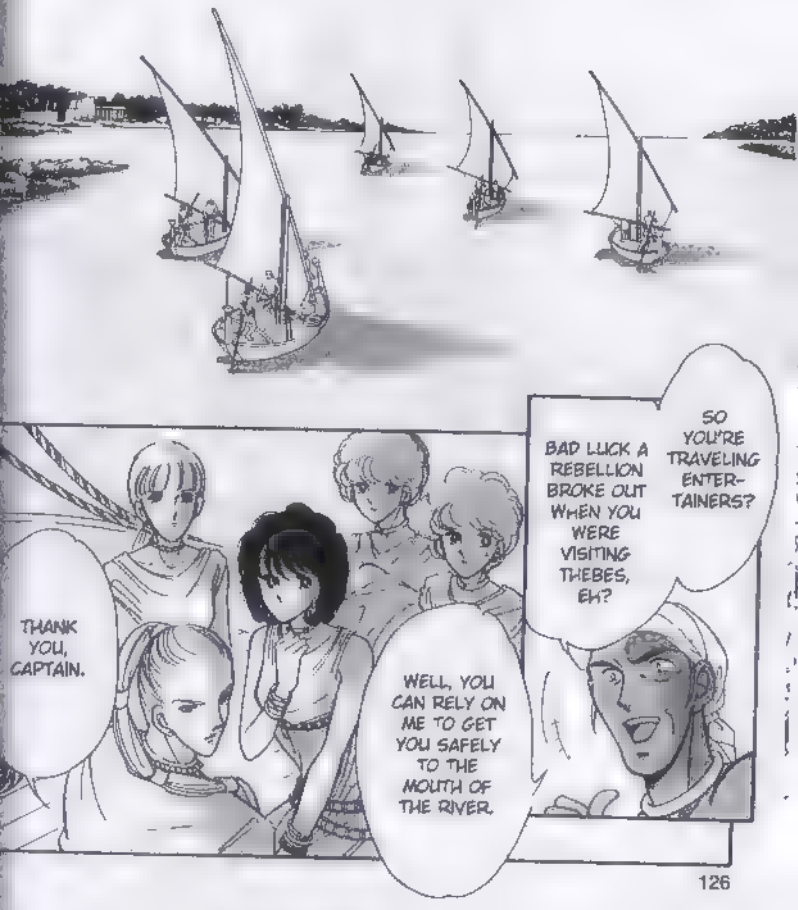

I HAVEN'T FINISHED YOUR BUST. ALLOW ME TO STAY AND CONTINUE MY WORK.
WE HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.
PLEASE DON'T SEND US AWAY, YOUR EXCELLENCY.
MY BUST...
I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THAT.
...AND COMPLETE THE EYES.
ALL THAT REMAINS IS TO ADD SOME JEWELRY..
IT'S ALMOST DONE

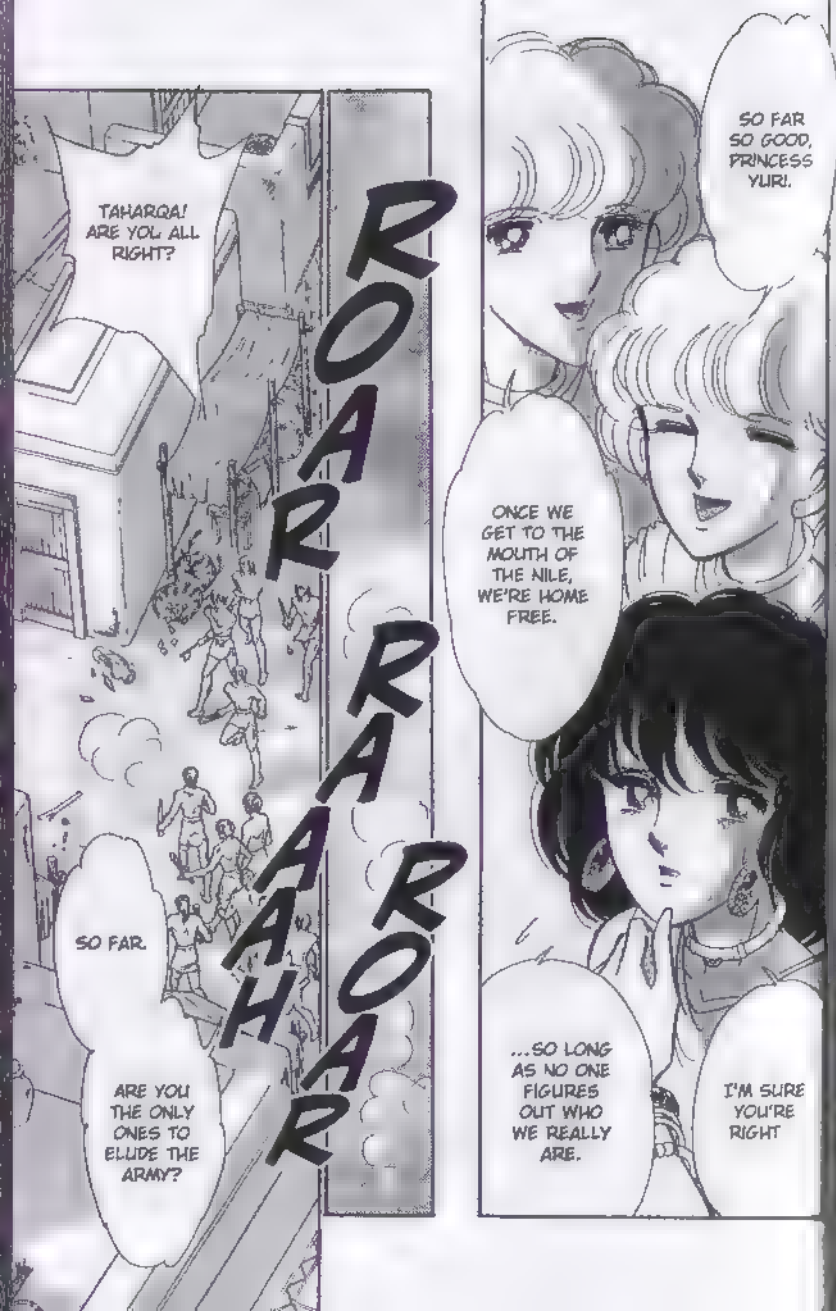
I'VE PUZZLED OVER HOW BEST TO DO YOUR EYES.
BLACK ONYX WOULD SUIT THEIR DEEP, LOVELY DEPTHS, BUT...
...I CAN'T FIND ANY OF A SUITABLE QUALITY.
TOTOMES...
...WILL THIS DO?
PLUNK
OH! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO FINE!
WHAT A BRILLIANT POLISH IT HAS!
IT'S FROM ONE OF THE EARRINGS I WORE ON MY WEDDING DAY.

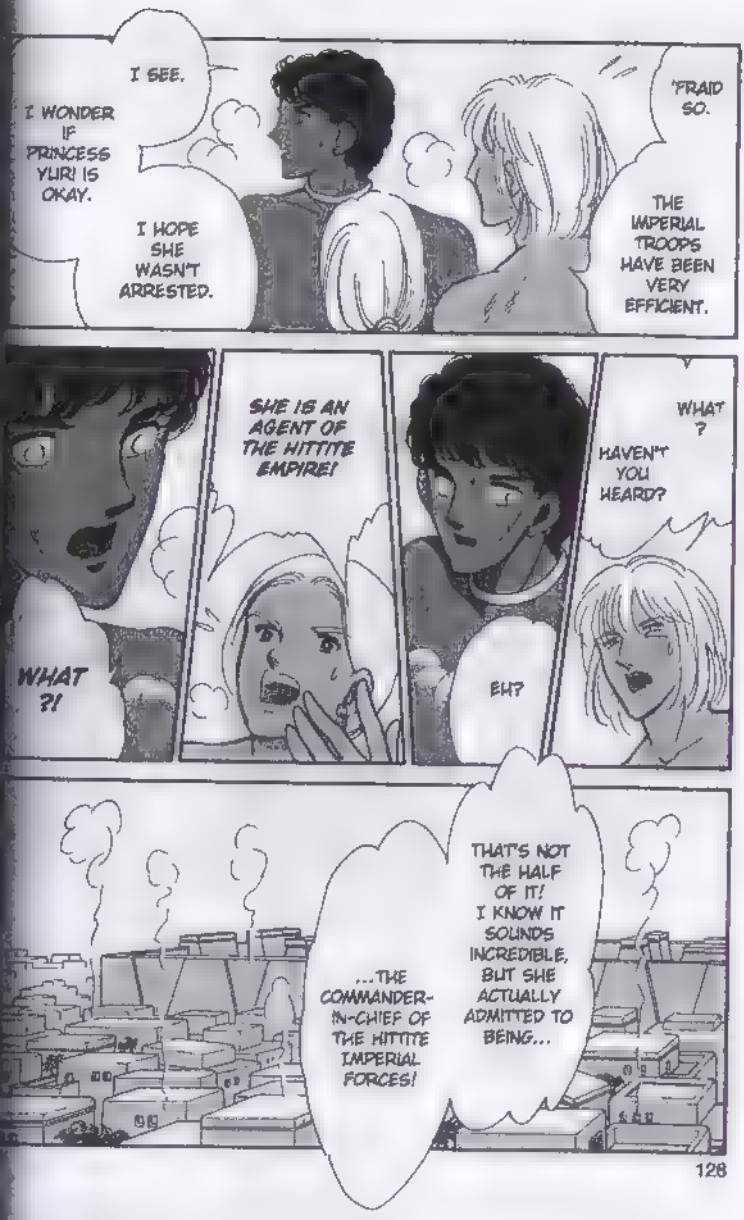

YOUR EXCELLENCY ...?
ROAR
I BEGIN TO WONDER IF...
...I'VE SUFFERED SOME KIND OF IMPAIRED VISION SINCE COMING TO EGYPT ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
EAR-RINGS!
GIVE ME THE OTHER, EXCELLENCY. THEY'LL MAKE SUPERB EYES!
ROAR
THERE IS NO OTHER, I'M AFRAID.
RAH
WELL...
...WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ABOUT OTHER PATHS WE MIGHT HAVE TAKEN.
RAAAAHH
OH...
THEN WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER EYE?
ROAR
LEAVE IT.

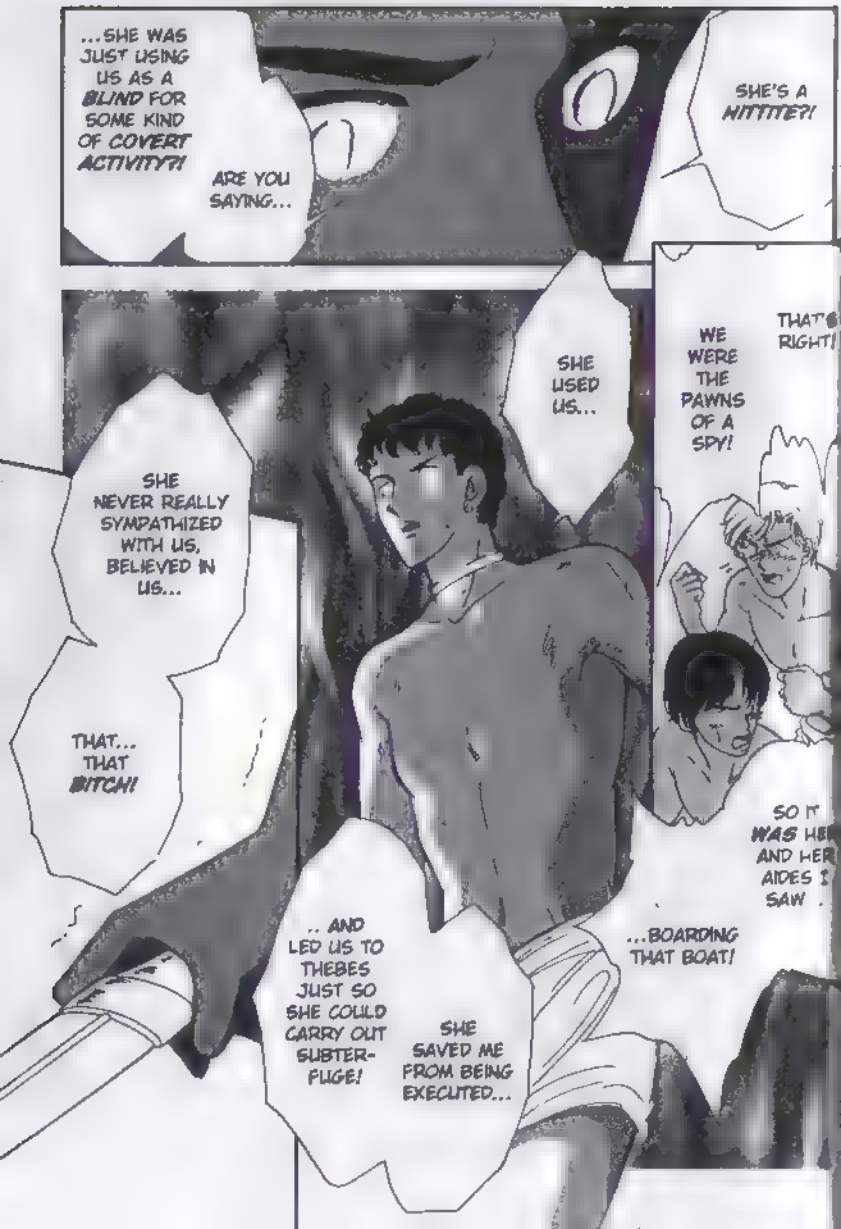

THIS BUST OF NEFERTITI, ONE OF ANCIENT EGYPT'S MOST FAMOUS WORKS OF ART...
...WAS DISCOVERED IN THE RUINS OF SCULPTOR TOTOMES' RESIDENCE IN TEL-AL-AMARNA (ANCIENT AKHENATEN) IN 1912.
A BUST WITH ONE FINISHED EYE WILL DO, TOTOMES.
AFTER ALL, WHO WILL EVER BOTHER TO LOOK AT IT?

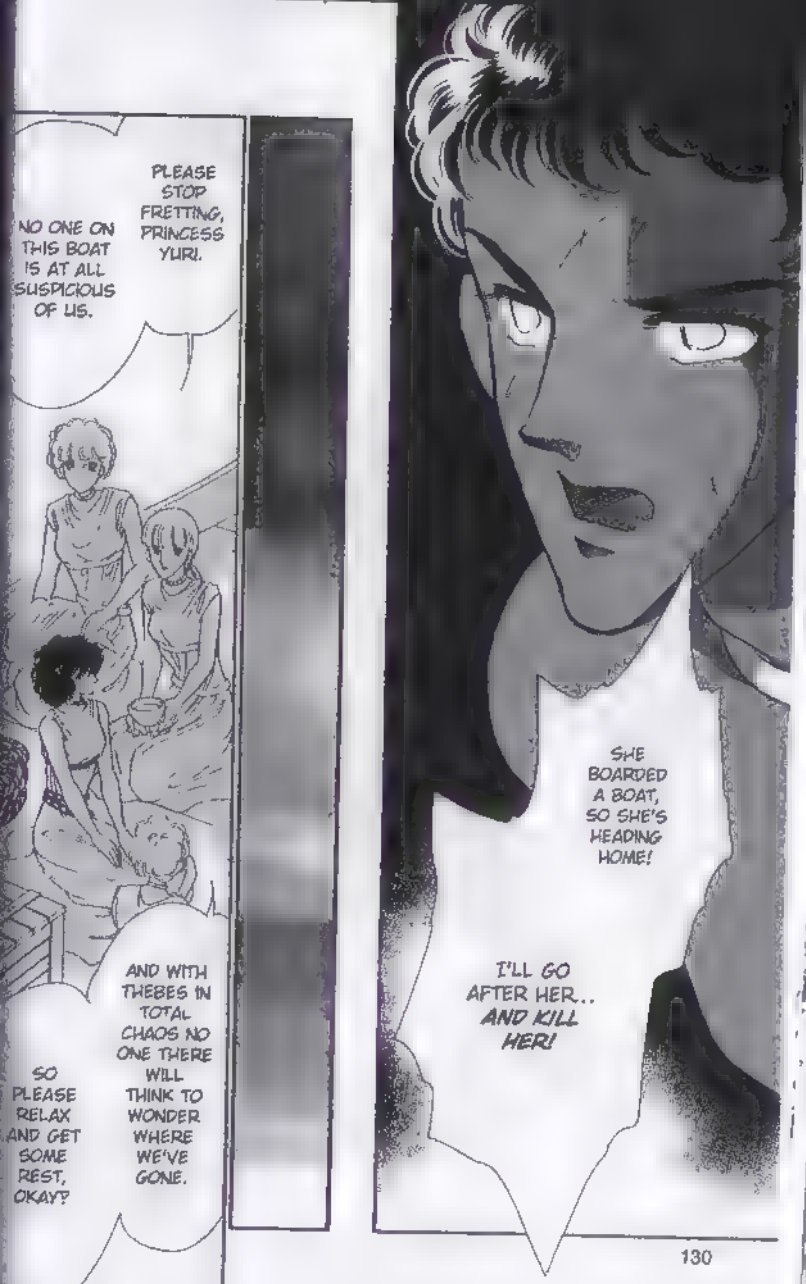
NO CONCLUSION HAS YET BEEN REACHED REGARDING THIS MYSTERY. THE BUST IS CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY IN A MUSEUM IN BERLIN.
FOR DECADES, THE BUST'S MISSING LEFT EYE HAS BAFFLED EXPERTS.

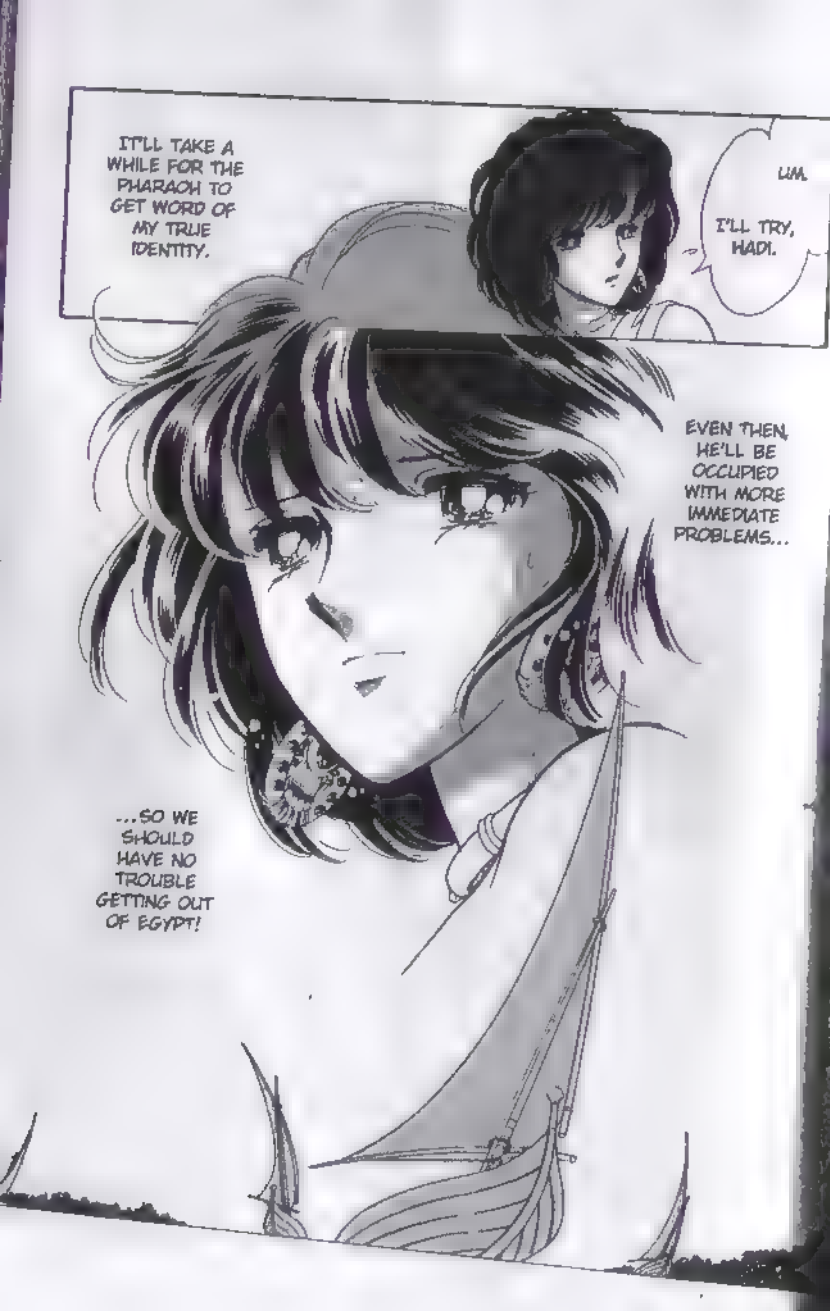

SO YOU'RE TRAVELING ENTER-TAINERS?
BAD LUCK A REBELLION BROKE OUT WHEN YOU WERE VISITING THEBES, EH?
WELL, YOU CAN RELY ON ME TO GET YOU SAFELY TO THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER.
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.

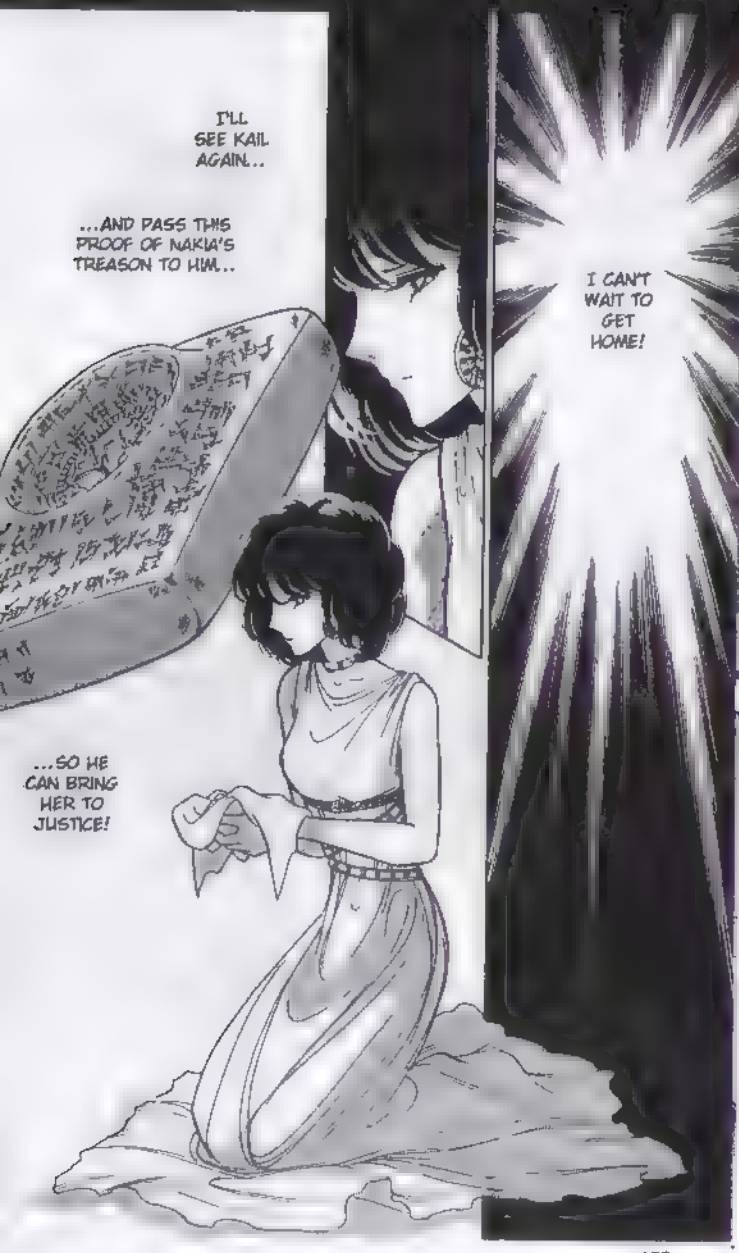

SO FAR SO GOOD, PRINCESS YURI.
I'M SURE YOU'RE RIGHT
...SO LONG AS NO ONE FIGURES OUT WHO WE REALLY ARE.
ONCE WE GET TO THE MOUTH OF THE NILE, WE'RE HOME FREE.
TAHARQA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
ROAR
RAAH
ROAR
SO FAR.
ARE YOU THE ONLY ONES TO ELUDE THE ARMY?

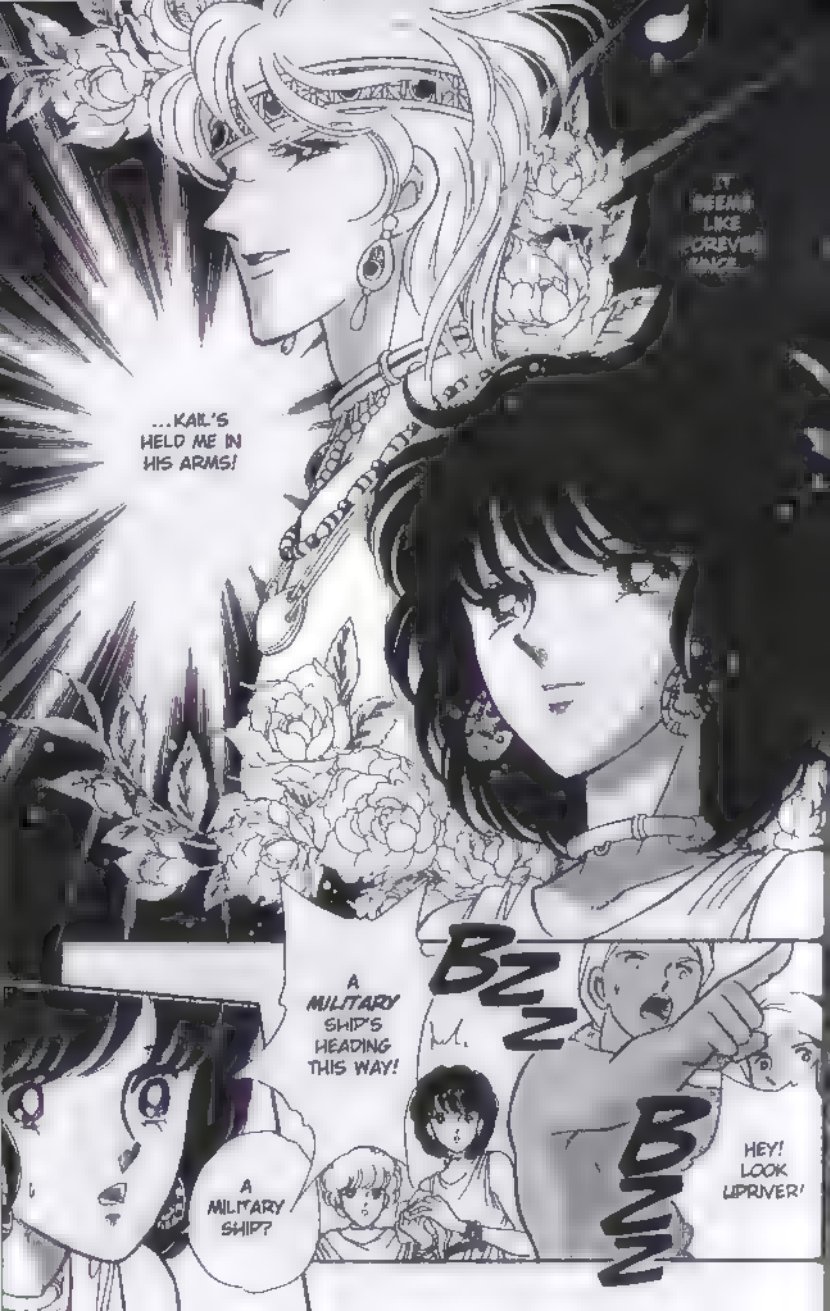

I SEE.
I WONDER IF PRINCESS YURI IS OKAY.
I HOPE SHE WASN'T ARRESTED.
'FRAID SO.
THE IMPERIAL TROOPS HAVE BEEN VERY EFFICIENT.
WHAT ?!
SHE IS AN AGENT OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE!
EH?
WHAT ?
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
...THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE HITTITE IMPERIAL FORCES!
THAT'S NOT THE HALF OF IT! I KNOW IT SOUNDS INCREDIBLE, BUT SHE ACTUALLY ADMITTED TO BEING...

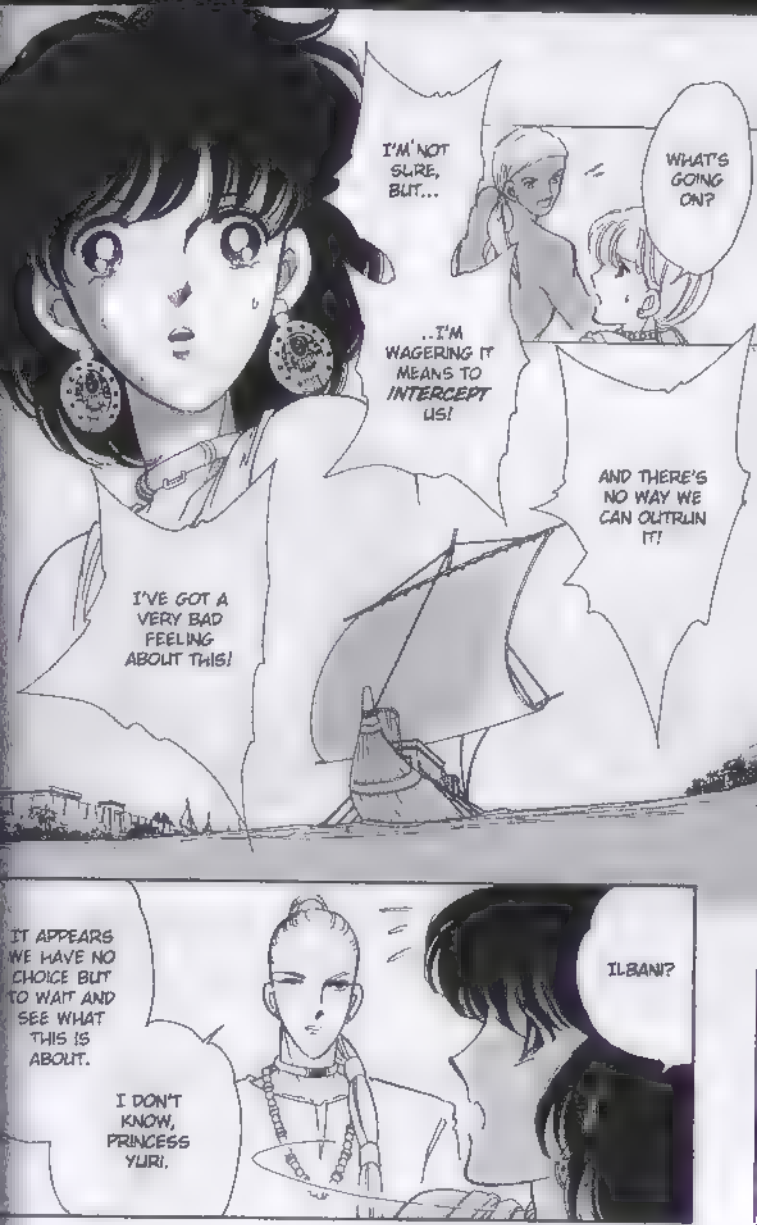

...SHE WAS JUST USING US AS A *BLIND* FOR SOME KIND OF *COVERT ACTIVITY?!*
ARE YOU SAYING...
SHE'S A *HITTITE?!*
SHE USED US...
WE WERE THE PAWNS OF A SPY!
THAT'S RIGHT!
SHE NEVER REALLY SYMPATHIZED WITH US, BELIEVED IN US...
THAT... THAT *BITCH!*
SO IT *WAS* HE AND HER AIDES I SAW .
...BOARDING THAT BOAT!
.. AND LED US TO THEBES JUST SO SHE COULD CARRY OUT SUBTER-FUGE!
SHE SAVED ME FROM BEING EXECUTED...


PLEASE STOP FRETTING, PRINCESS YURI.
NO ONE ON THIS BOAT IS AT ALL SUSPICIOUS OF US.
AND WITH THEBES IN TOTAL CHAOS NO ONE THERE WILL THINK TO WONDER WHERE WE'VE GONE.
SO PLEASE RELAX AND GET SOME REST, OKAY?
SHE BOARDED A BOAT, SO SHE'S HEADING HOME!
I'LL GO AFTER HER... AND KILL HER!

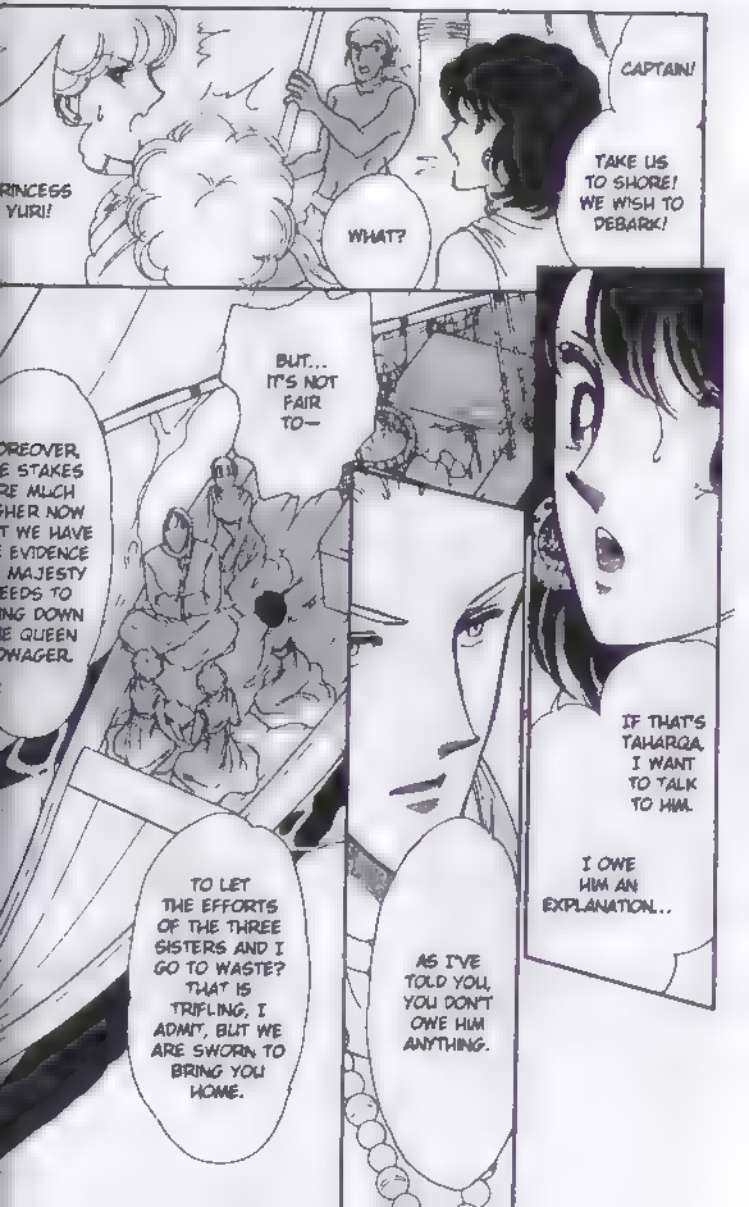

IT'LL TAKE A WHILE FOR THE PHARAOH TO GET WORD OF MY TRUE IDENTITY.
UM.
I'LL TRY, HADI.
EVEN THEN, HE'LL BE OCCUPIED WITH MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS...
...SO WE SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE GETTING OUT OF EGYPT!


I'LL SEE KAIL AGAIN...
...AND PASS THIS PROOF OF NAKIA'S TREASON TO HIM...
I CAN'T WAIT TO GET HOME!
...SO HE CAN BRING HER TO JUSTICE!


...KAIL'S HELD ME IN HIS ARMS!
IT SEEMS LIKE FOREVER SINCE...
BZZZ
BZZZ
HEY! LOOK UPRIVER!
A MILITARY SHIP'S HEADING THIS WAY!
A MILITARY SHIP?


I'M NOT SURE, BUT...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
..I'M WAGERING IT MEANS TO INTERCEPT US!
AND THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN OUTRUN IT!
I'VE GOT A VERY BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS!
IT APPEARS WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THIS IS ABOUT.
I DON'T KNOW, PRINCESS YURI.
ILBANI?

HURRY UP!
WE NEED TO STOP THAT BOAT!
HIJACKING AN IMPERIAL NAVAL VESSEL IS BAD ENOUGH, BUT—
YOU *SURE* YOU WANT TO DO THIS?
I GO ALONG WITH THE CREW ABOUT THAT BAD FEELING...
SILENCE! WE'RE REBELS, READY TO DIE FOR OUR CAUSE.
BUT I WON'T DIE BEFORE I KILL THAT TRAITOROUS HITTITE SPY!


RINCESS YURI!
WHAT?
CAPTAIN!
TAKE US TO SHORE! WE WISH TO DEBARK!
OREOVER, E STAKES RE MUCH GHER NOW T WE HAVE E EVIDENCE MAJESTY EEDS TO NG DOWN E QUEEN OWAGER.
BUT... IT'S NOT FAIR TO—
IF THAT'S TAHARQA, I WANT TO TALK TO HIM.
I OWE HIM AN EXPLANATION...
TO LET THE EFFORTS OF THE THREE SISTERS AND I GO TO WASTE? THAT IS TRIFLING, I ADMIT, BUT WE ARE SWORN TO BRING YOU HOME.
AS I'VE TOLD YOU, YOU DON'T OWE HIM ANYTHING.

!!
YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT, BUT WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LOSE? HIS SHIP'S GOING TO OVERTAKE US IN ANY EVENT!
I DOUBT HE'LL WANT TO LISTEN!
BUT I ONLY WANT TO TALK TO HIM, ILBANI!
THEIR BOAT IS PULLING TO SHORE!
DO THE SAME! NOW!

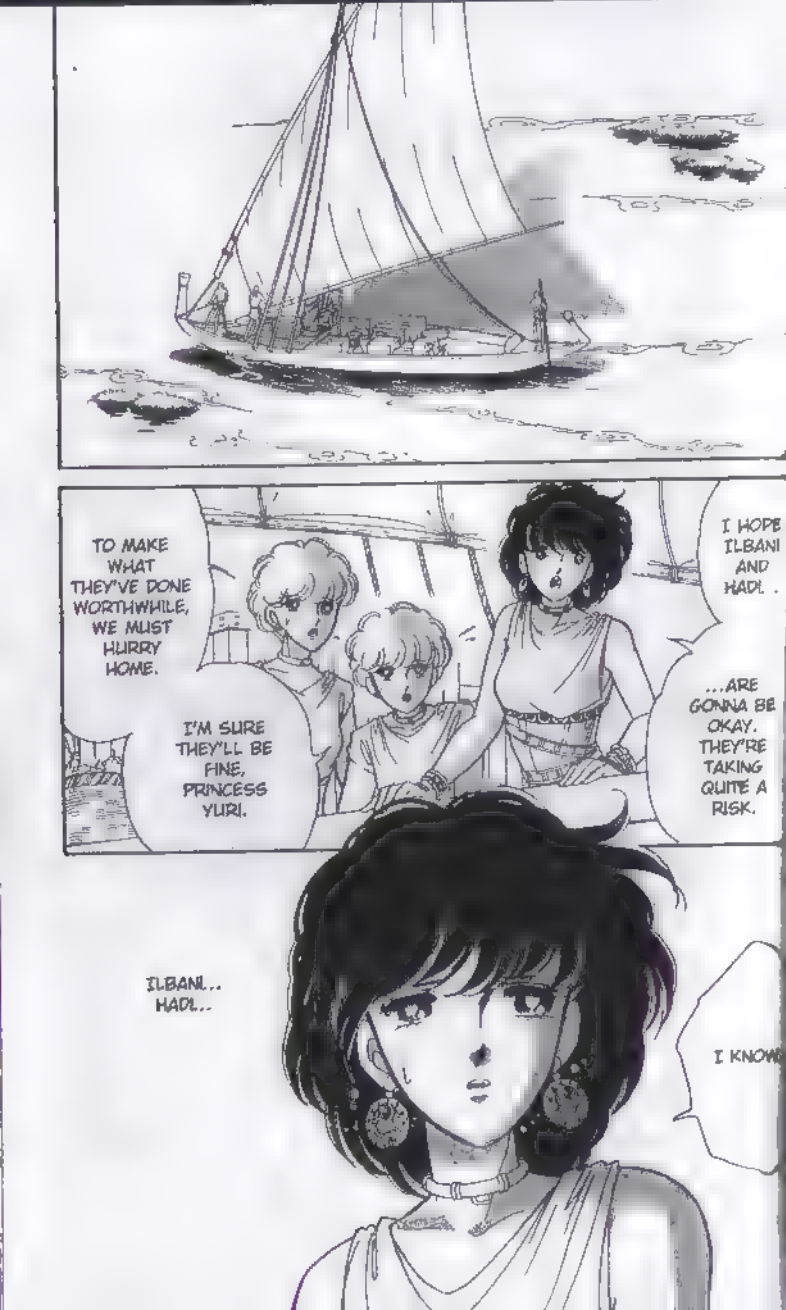
HOLD IT!
DID YOU THINK YOU COULD JUST WALK AWAY?!
SPLASH
THE WOMEN LEFT THE BOAT!
GET US OVER THERE!

ANSWER ME, DAMN YOU!
ANSWER ME, HITTITE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF!
WU
P

ROAR
RAAH
GENERAL RAMSES ...
WE'VE HERDED MOST OF THE INSURGENTS INTO THE TEMPLE OF MUT!
SIR!
ONE OF OUR SHIPS HAS BEEN HI-JACKED!
RAAH
A SMALL NUMBER ARE STILL LOOSE, BUT WE'LL GET THEM.
ROAR
DON'T BOTHER. WE'VE PUT DOWN THE UPRISING, SO OUR PRIORITY NOW IS TO SECURE THE CITY.

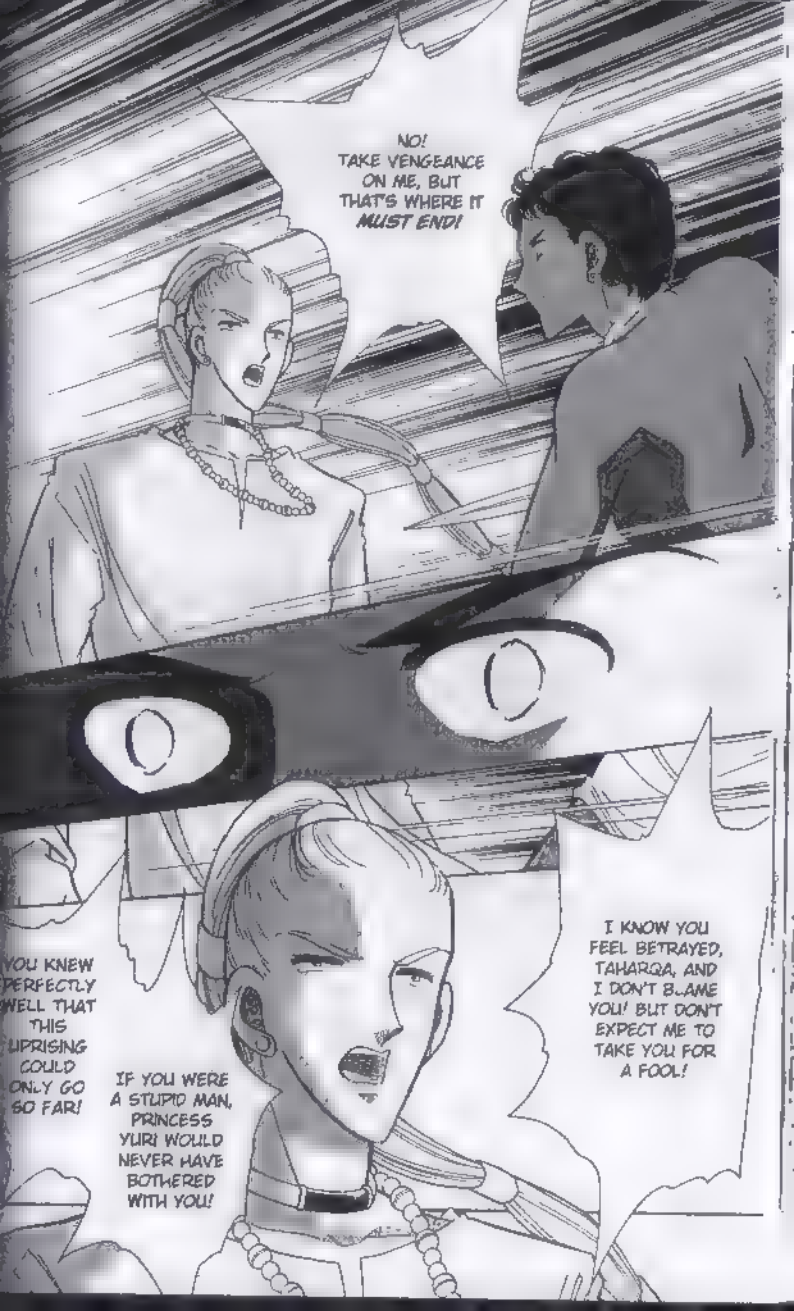
FLOP
AAAH!
YOU'RE NOT THEM!

WHERE IS SHE?!
WHERE IS YURI SO-CALLED ISHTAR?!
SMIRK


TO MAKE WHAT THEY'VE DONE WORTHWHILE, WE MUST HURRY HOME.
I'M SURE THEY'LL BE FINE, PRINCESS YURI.
I HOPE ILBANI AND HADI . . .
...ARE GONNA BE OKAY. THEY'RE TAKING QUITE A RISK.
ILBANI... HADI...
I KNOW

WELL? IT'S TRUE, ISN'T IT?!
YOU PEOPLE USED US FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH PURPOSES AND NOW YOU'RE ABANDONING US!
MY BUSINESS?! DON'T TOY WITH ME!
WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS WITH PRINCESS YURI?

WHAT?!
YOU SPEAK AS IF...
...THERE WAS MORE YOU EXPECTED OF US.
IF YOU NEED ANYONE TO HATE, HATE ME.
...I PROPOSED FOMENTING A REBELLION, NOT PRINCESS YURI.
YOU ADMIT IT!
IT IS TRUE WE USED YOU.
HOW-EVER..
FINE!
I'LL KILL YOU FIRST!
ILBANI!
ZINK


NO! TAKE VENGEANCE ON ME, BUT THAT'S WHERE IT MUST END!
I KNOW YOU FEEL BETRAYED, TAHARQA, AND I DON'T BLAME YOU! BUT DON'T EXPECT ME TO TAKE YOU FOR A FOOL!
IF YOU WERE A STUPID MAN, PRINCESS YURI WOULD NEVER HAVE BOTHERED WITH YOU!
YOU KNEW PERFECTLY WELL THAT THIS UPRISING COULD ONLY GO SO FAR!

YOU WATCH YOUR MOUTH, HITTITE!
KLANK
AND YOU REALIZE NOW THAT IT'S ACTUALLY GONE FARTHER THAN YOU HAD ANY RIGHT TO EXPECT!
TAHARQA!

TA-RUMP TA-RUMP
TA-RUMP TA-RUMP
THE PHARAOH'S SOLDIERS!
THEY'RE COMING AFTER US!
YOU MUST BE THE HIJACKERS
LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS

WE'RE FOR IT NOW, TAHARQA.
KLOPKLOP
KLOPKLOP
"IF YOU WERE A STUPID MAN, PRINCESS YURI WOULD NEVER HAVE BOTHERED WITH YOU!"
"YOU KNEW PERFECTLY WELL THAT THIS UPRISING COULD ONLY GO SO FAR!"

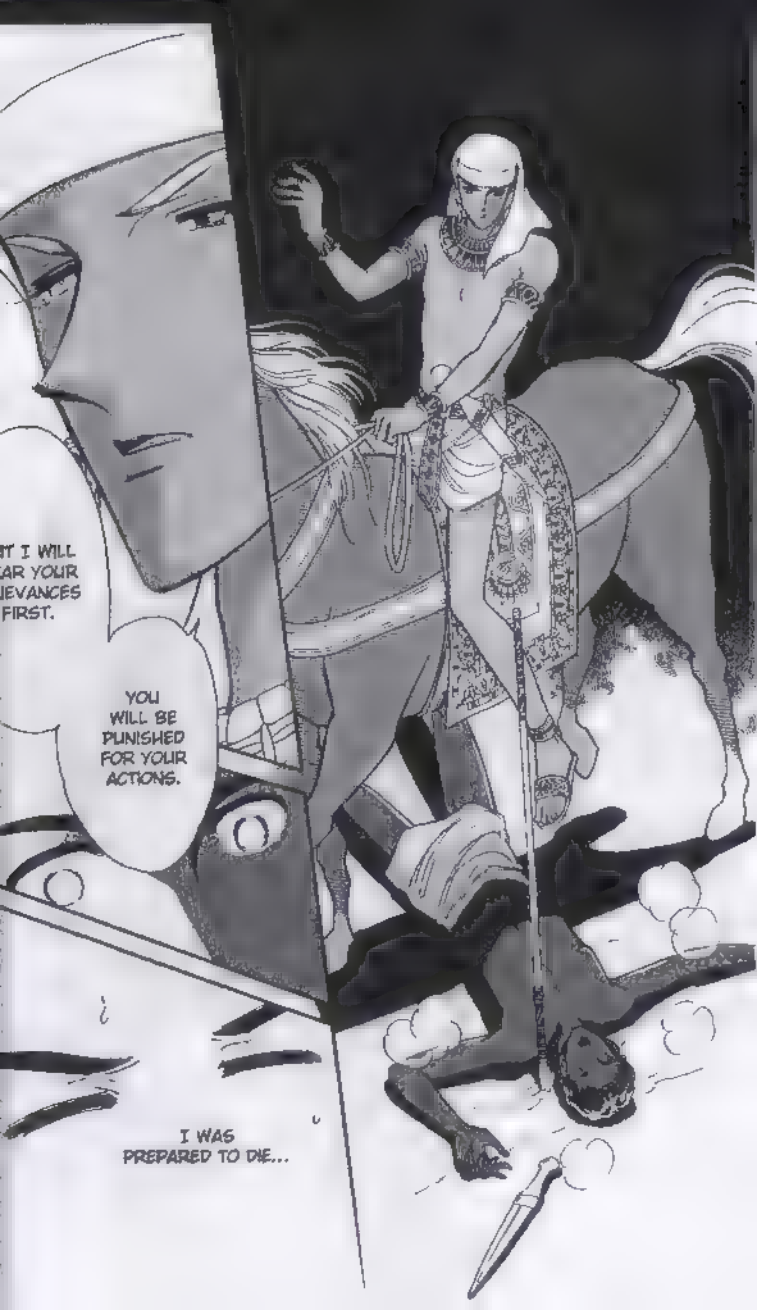
HEAR ME, GENERAL RAMSES!
OUR PHARAOH DOESN'T KNOW HOW MISERABLE HIS PEOPLE'S LIVES ARE! HE HAS NO IDEA HOW TYRANNICAL HIS OFFICIALS HAVE BECOME!
KLANK
...TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR OUR CHILDREN!
WE ONLY WANT ..
TKT
DUM
REBELLION WAS THE ONLY WAY LEFT TO US!

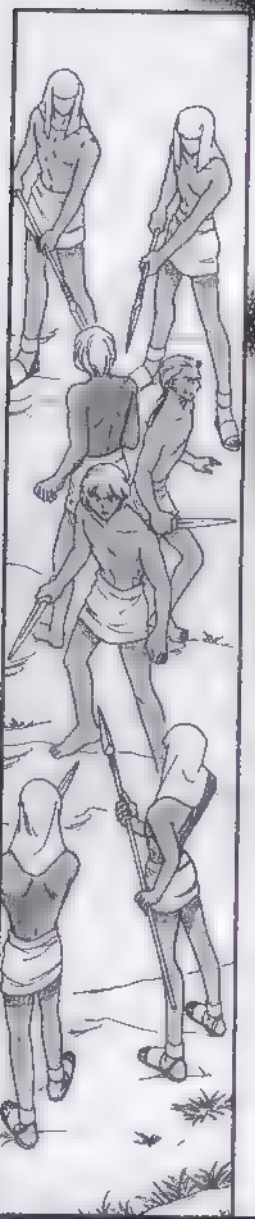
SHOOM

YOU SPEA WELL YOU CAUS

!

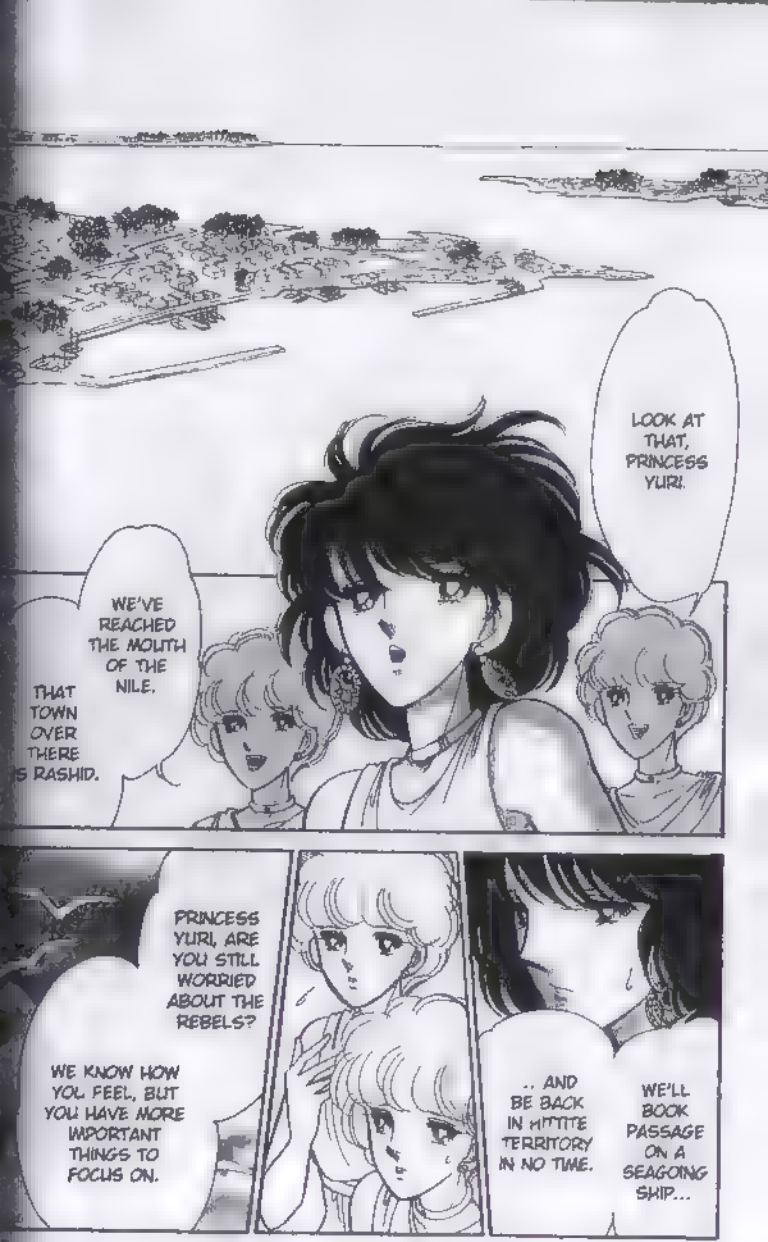
BUT THIS IT FOR YOU.

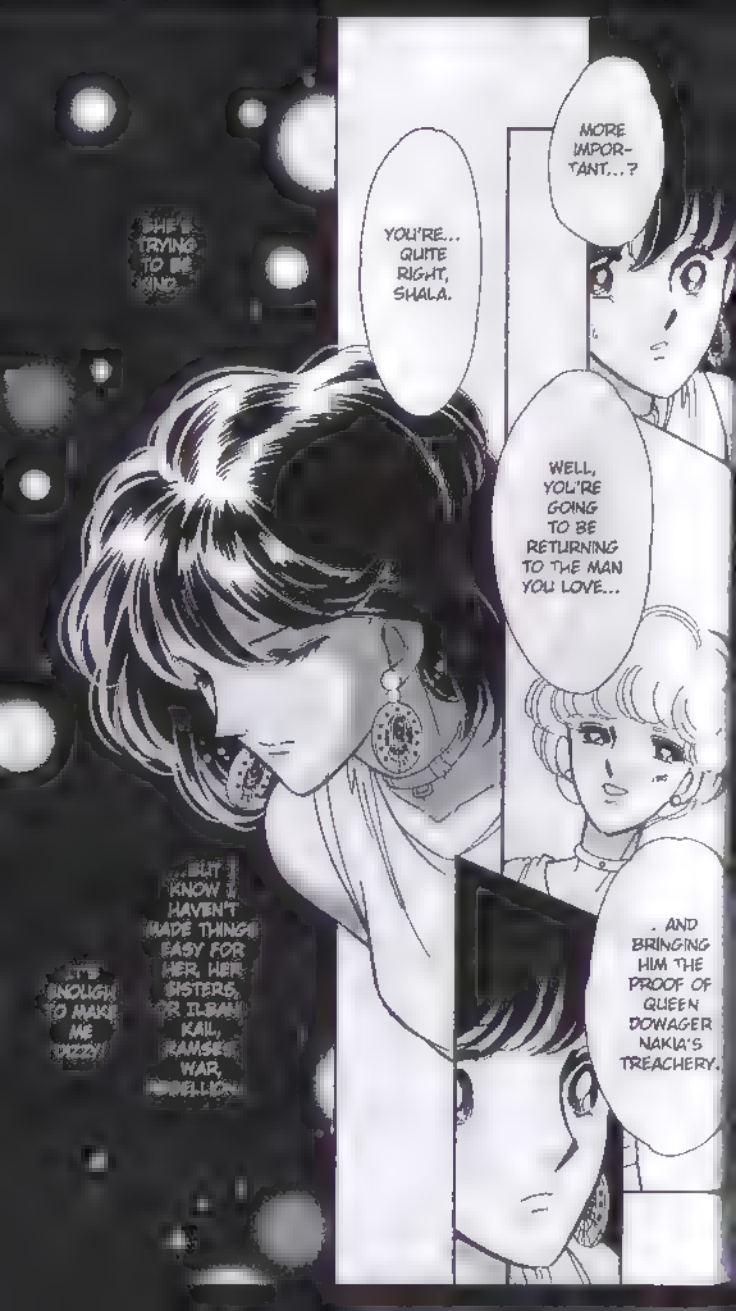

IT I WILL
EAR YOUR
IEVANCES
FIRST.
YOU WILL BE PUNISHED FOR YOUR ACTIONS.
I WAS PREPARED TO DIE...

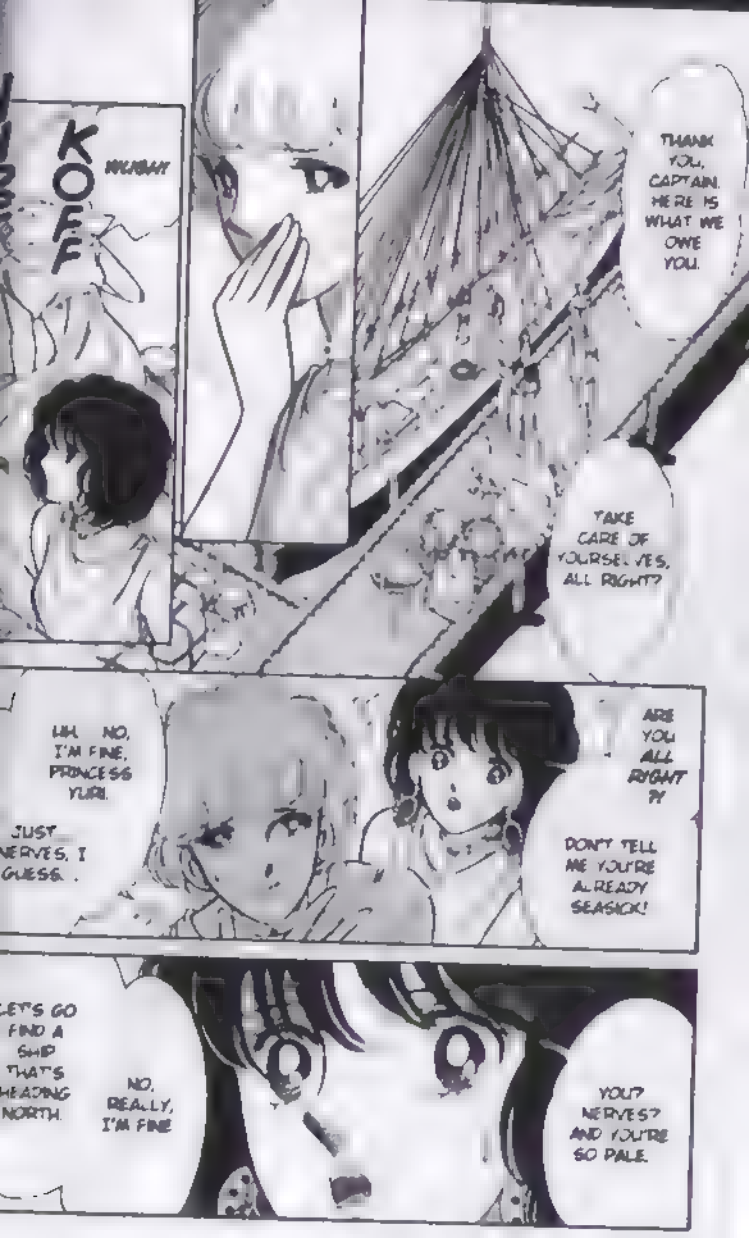


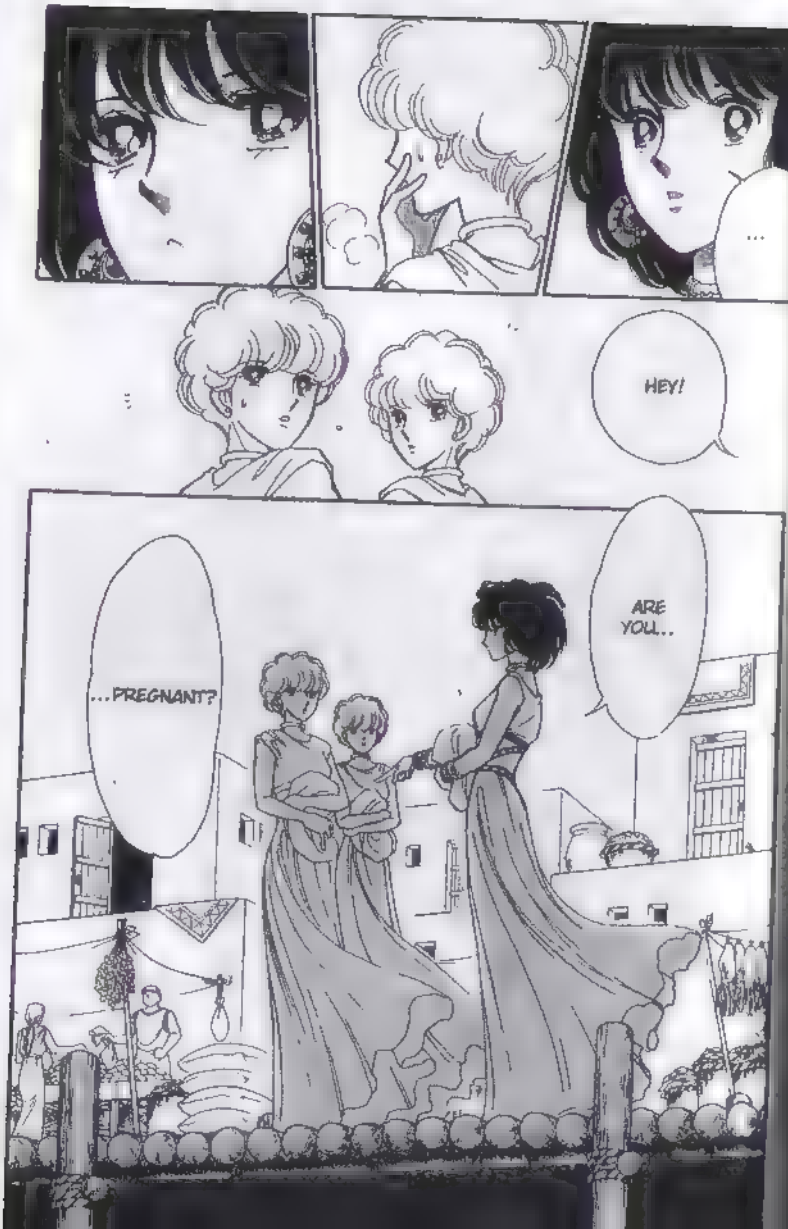
...AND WILL ACCEPT DEATH AT ANY TIME

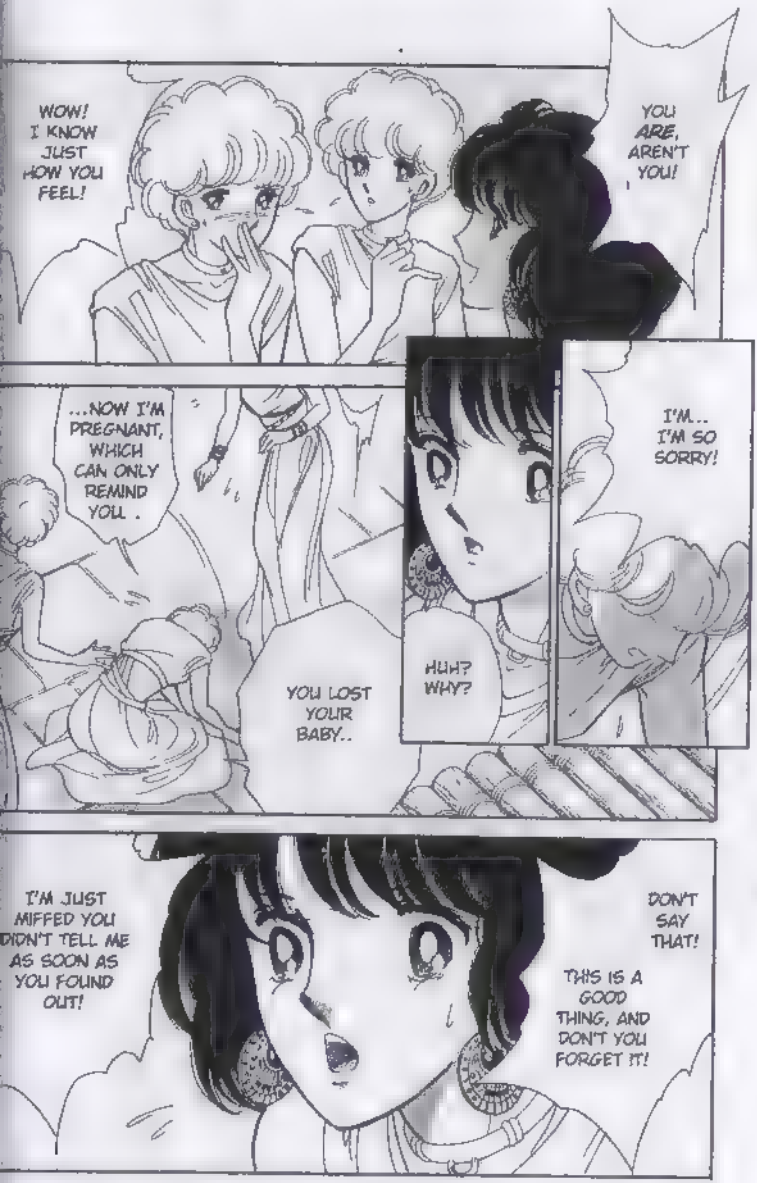
MY ONLY *REGRET* IS THAT I DIDN'T *KILL YURI ISHTAR!*


LOOK AT THAT, PRINCESS YURI.
WE'VE REACHED THE MOUTH OF THE NILE.
THAT TOWN OVER THERE IS RASHID.
PRINCESS YURI, ARE YOU STILL WORRIED ABOUT THE REBELS?
WE KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT YOU HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO FOCUS ON.
WE'LL BOOK PASSAGE ON A SEAGOING SHIP...
.. AND BE BACK IN HITTITE TERRITORY IN NO TIME.


MORE IMPOR-TANT...?
YOU'RE... QUITE RIGHT, SHALA.
WELL, YOU'RE GOING TO BE RETURNING TO THE MAN YOU LOVE...
. AND BRINGING HIM THE PROOF OF QUEEN DOWAGER NAKIA'S TREACHERY.
SHE'S TRYING TO BE KIND.
...BUT I KNOW I HAVEN'T MADE THINGS EASY FOR HER, HER SISTERS, OR ILBANI. KAIL, RAMSES, WAR, REBELLION...
IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ME DIZZY!

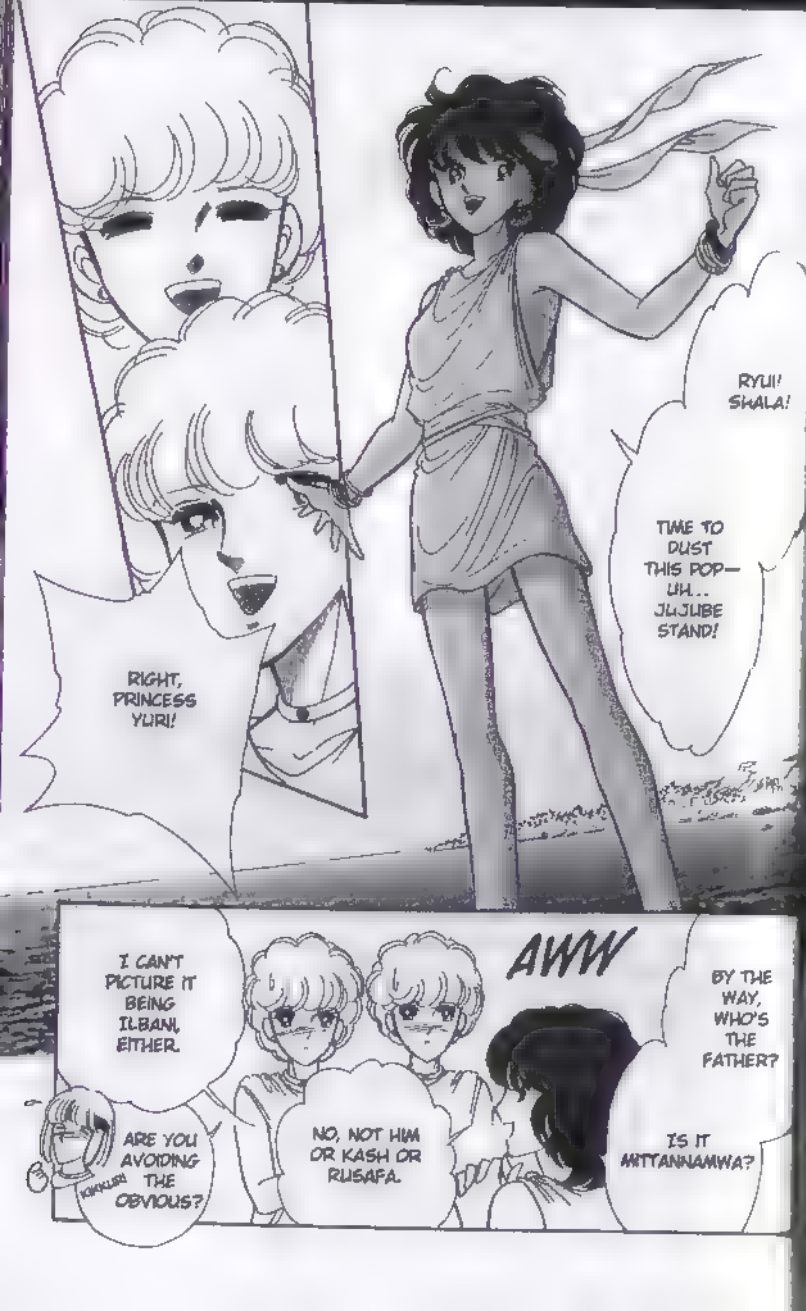

KOF
HUMMM
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. HERE IS WHAT WE OWE YOU.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELVES, ALL RIGHT?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ALREADY SEASICK!
UH, NO, I'M FINE, PRINCESS YURI.
JUST NERVES, I GUESS.
YOU? NERVES? AND YOU'RE SO PALE.
NO, REALLY, I'M FINE
LET'S GO FIND A SHIP THAT'S HEADING NORTH.

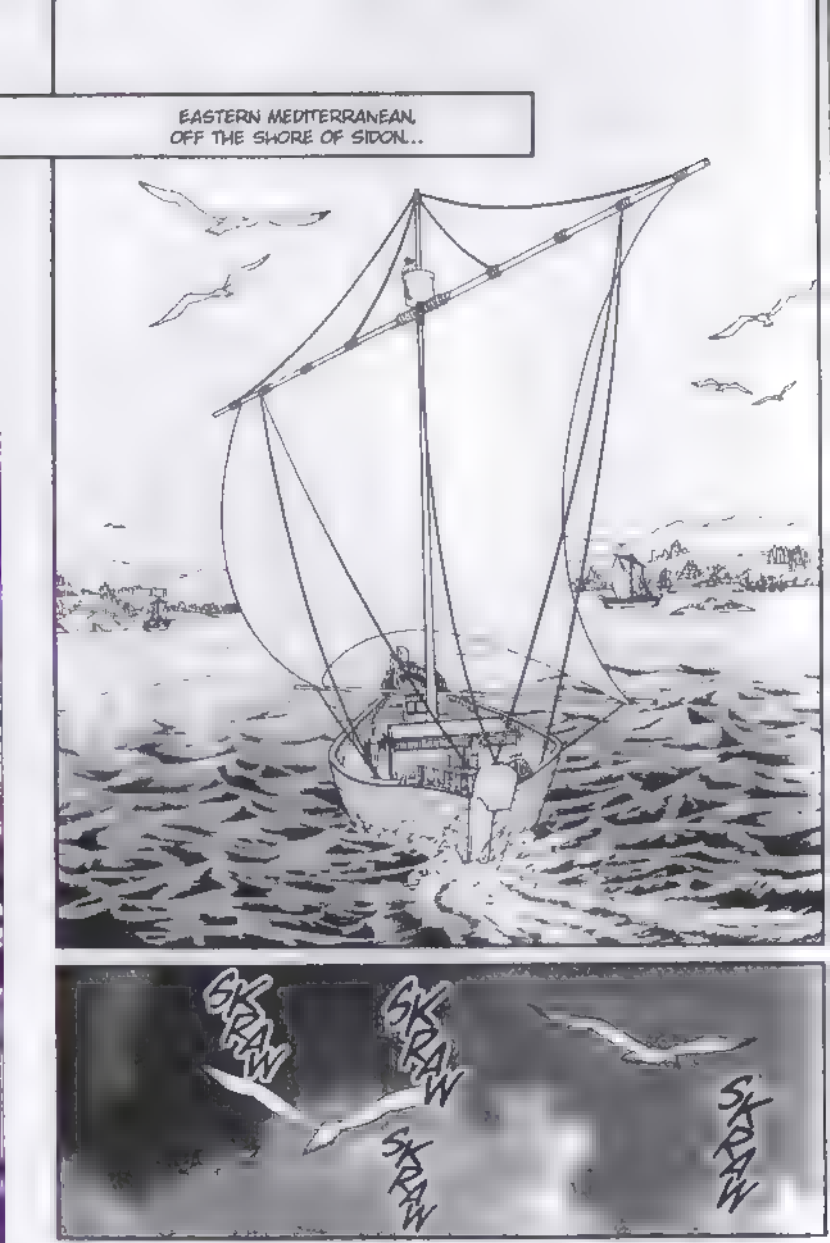

...
HEY!
ARE YOU...
...PREGNANT?

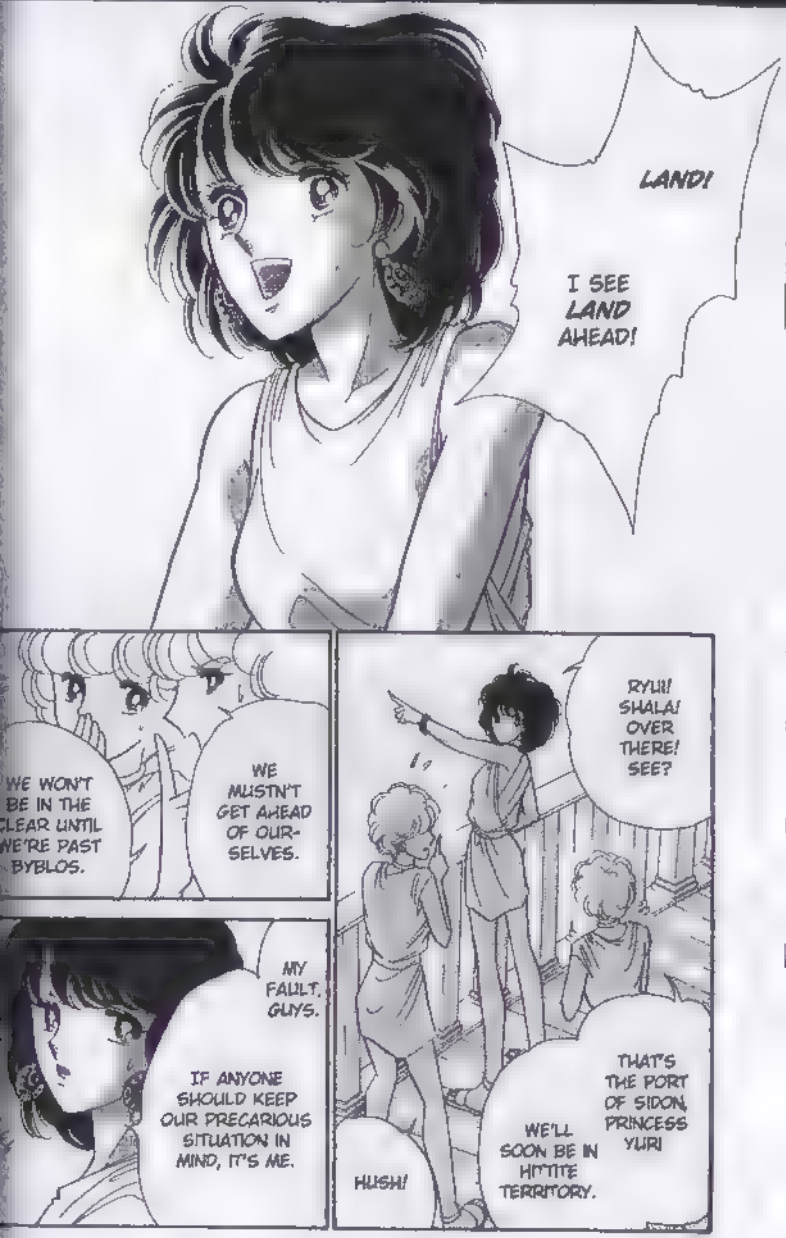

WOW! I KNOW JUST HOW YOU FEEL!
YOU ARE, AREN'T YOU!
...NOW I'M PREGNANT, WHICH CAN ONLY REMIND YOU .
I'M... I'M SO SORRY!
YOU LOST YOUR BABY..
HUH? WHY?
I'M JUST MIFFED YOU DIDN'T TELL ME AS SOON AS YOU FOUND OUT!
DON'T SAY THAT!
THIS IS A GOOD THING, AND DON'T YOU FORGET IT!

PRINCESS YURI ?
BUT THEN, HOW COULD YOU TELL ME...
...WHEN I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF LEADING A REBELLION?
WELL, I GUESS...

SO JUST STAY HERE. I'LL GO FIND US A SHIP.
...BUT NO MORE OF THAT, OKAY? YOU NEED REST!
YOU RAN AROUND FIGHTING AN' ALL...
I'LL GET SOME SENSIBLE CLOTHES WHILE I'M AT IT!
YOU STAY WITH YOUR SISTER!
LET ME DO THAT, PRINCESS YURI!
AAAH..
..THIS IS ORE LIKE IT!
PARDON ME, BUT I'D LIKE TO EXCHANGE THIS DRESS I'M WEARING FOR SOMETHING MORE PRACTICAL.
THAT'S A VERY ELEGANT GOWN.
WHATEVER YOU WANT IN MY SHOP, IT'S YOURS.


RYU!! SHALA!
TIME TO DUST THIS POP— UH... JUJUBE STAND!
RIGHT, PRINCESS YURI!
AWW
I CAN'T PICTURE IT BEING ILBANI, EITHER.
BY THE WAY, WHO'S THE FATHER?
ARE YOU AVOIDING THE OBVIOUS?
KIKKLIRI
NO, NOT HIM OR KASH OR RUSAFA.
IS IT MITTANNAMWA?

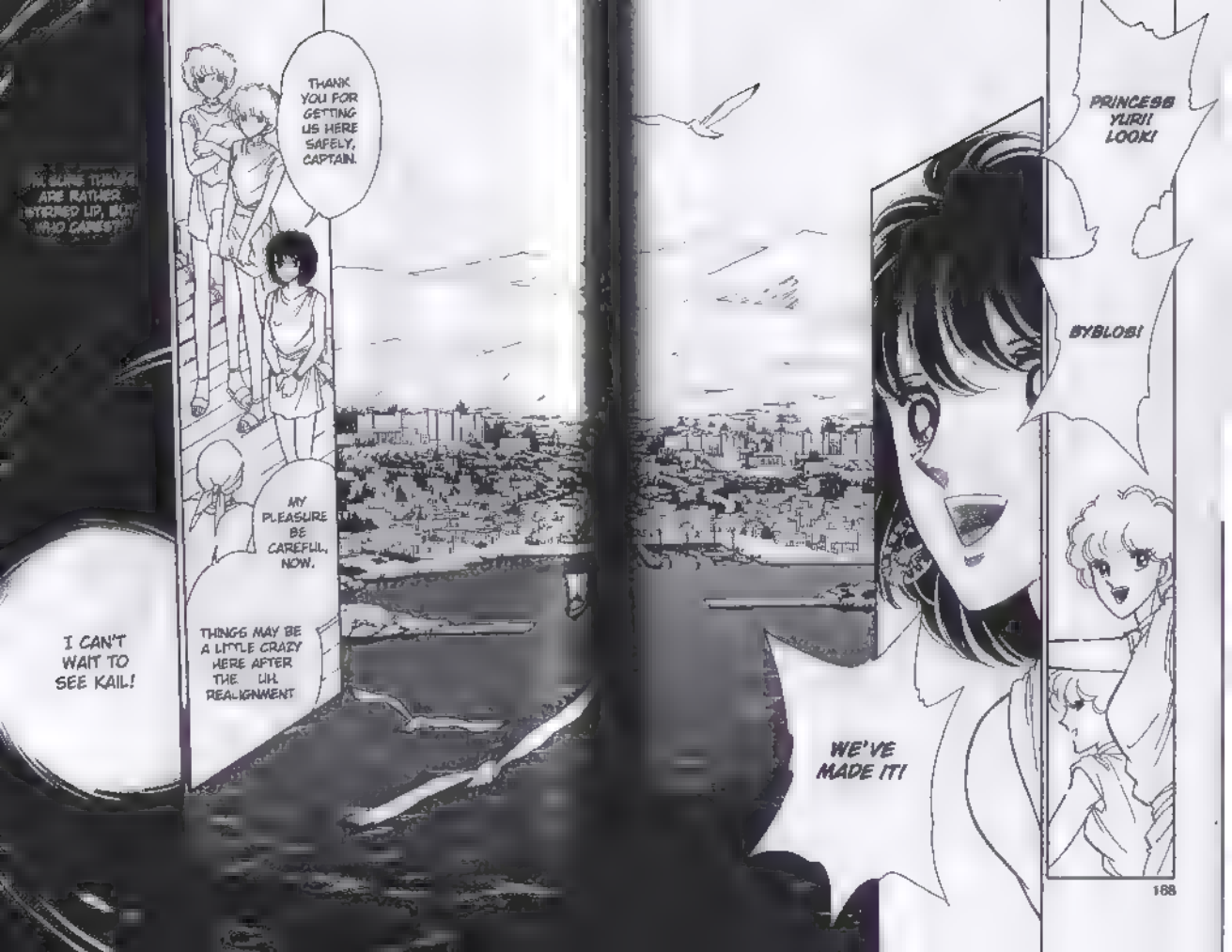

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN,
OFF THE SHORE OF SIDON...
SKRAW
SKRAW
SKRAW
SKRAW


LAND!
I SEE LAND AHEAD!
WE MUSTN'T GET AHEAD OF OURSELVES.
WE WON'T BE IN THE CLEAR UNTIL WE'RE PAST BYBLOS.
RYU! SHALA! OVER THERE! SEE?
THAT'S THE PORT OF SIDON, PRINCESS YURI
WE'LL SOON BE IN HITTITE TERRITORY.
HUSH!
MY FAULT, GUYS.
IF ANYONE SHOULD KEEP OUR PRECARIOUS SITUATION IN MIND, IT'S ME.

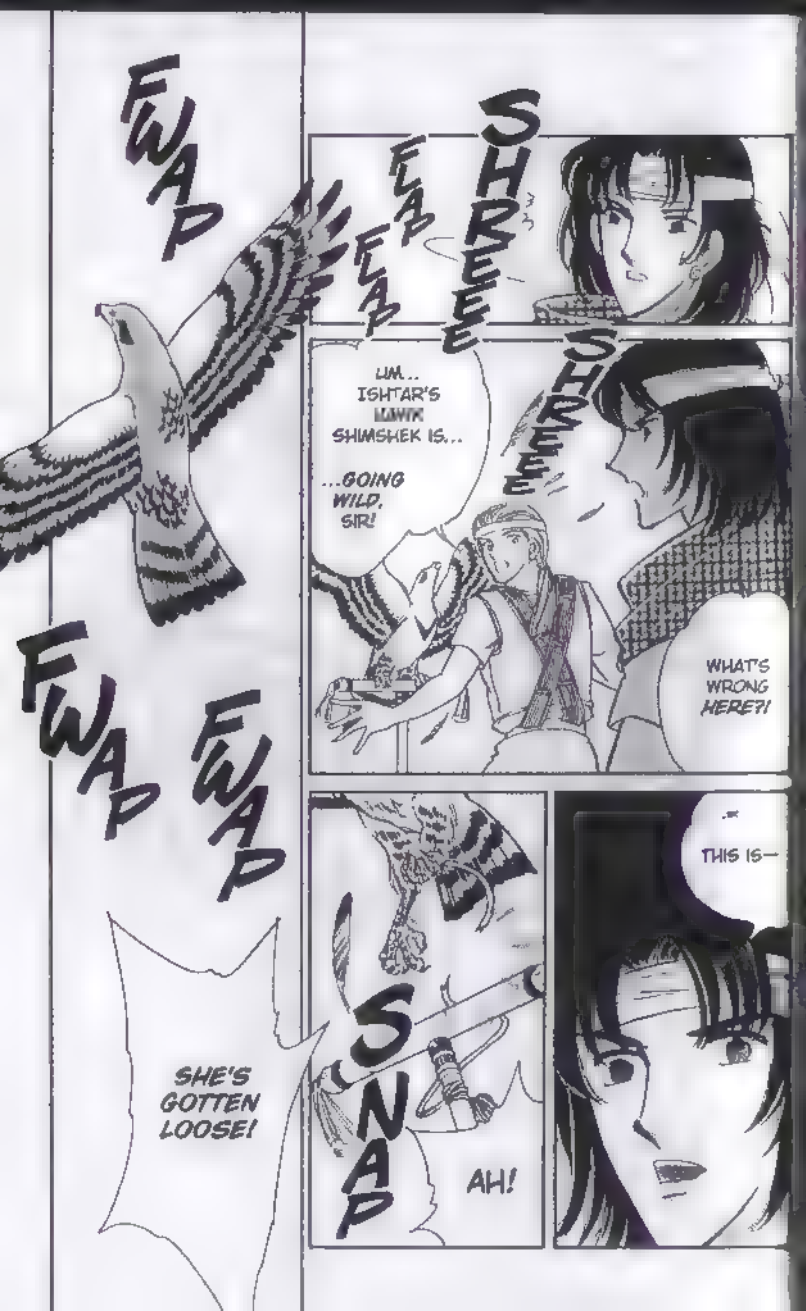
BYBLOS IS LOCATED VERY CLOSE TO THE BORDER.
WE CAN'T PRESUME WE'LL JUST SLIP BY THE SECURITY THERE
I GOTTA SAY, I CAN'T WAIT!

MUR MUR
MUR MUR
MUR MUR
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
THE MEN WHO DELIVERED OUR PROVISIONS.
HAVE TOLD S THINGS E TAKEN A TURN IN YBLOS.
THE HITTITE ARMY ADVANCED...
...FORCING THE EGYPTIANS TO WITHDRAW.
BYBLOS IS NOW UNDER HITTITE CONTROL.

THE HITTITES CONTROL BYBLOS!
ONLY KAIL COULD HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THAT!
I'LL BET HE'S THERE RIGHT NOW!
WE'RE CANAANITES NEUTRALS...
...SO WE WILL HEAD FOR BYBLOS AS PLANNED. AS FOR YOU...
TRAVELING ENTER-TAINERS ARE NEUTRALS, TOO.
WE'RE FINE WIT THAT, CAPTAIN
HOW LUCKY!
WE'LL BE IN BYBLOS TOMOR-ROW.
IF YOU'RE HAPPY, I'M HAPPY. AS LONG AS YOU PAY YOUR FARES.

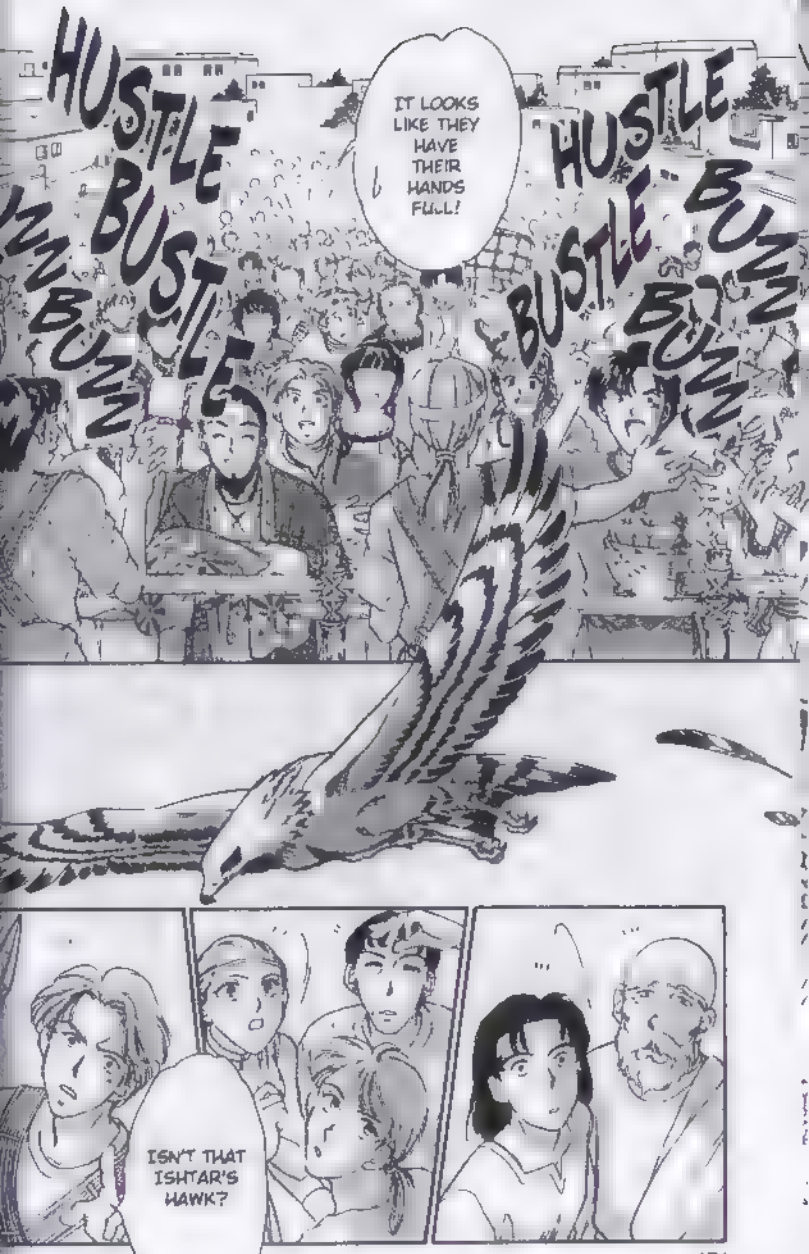

SOME THINGS ARE RATHER STRANGE LIP, BUT WHO CARES?
THANK YOU FOR GETTING US HERE SAFELY, CAPTAIN.
MY PLEASURE BE CAREFUL, NOW.
THINGS MAY BE A LITTLE CRAZY HERE AFTER THE LIH REALIGNMENT
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE KAIL!
PRINCESS YURI! LOOK!
BYBLOS!
WE'VE MADE IT!

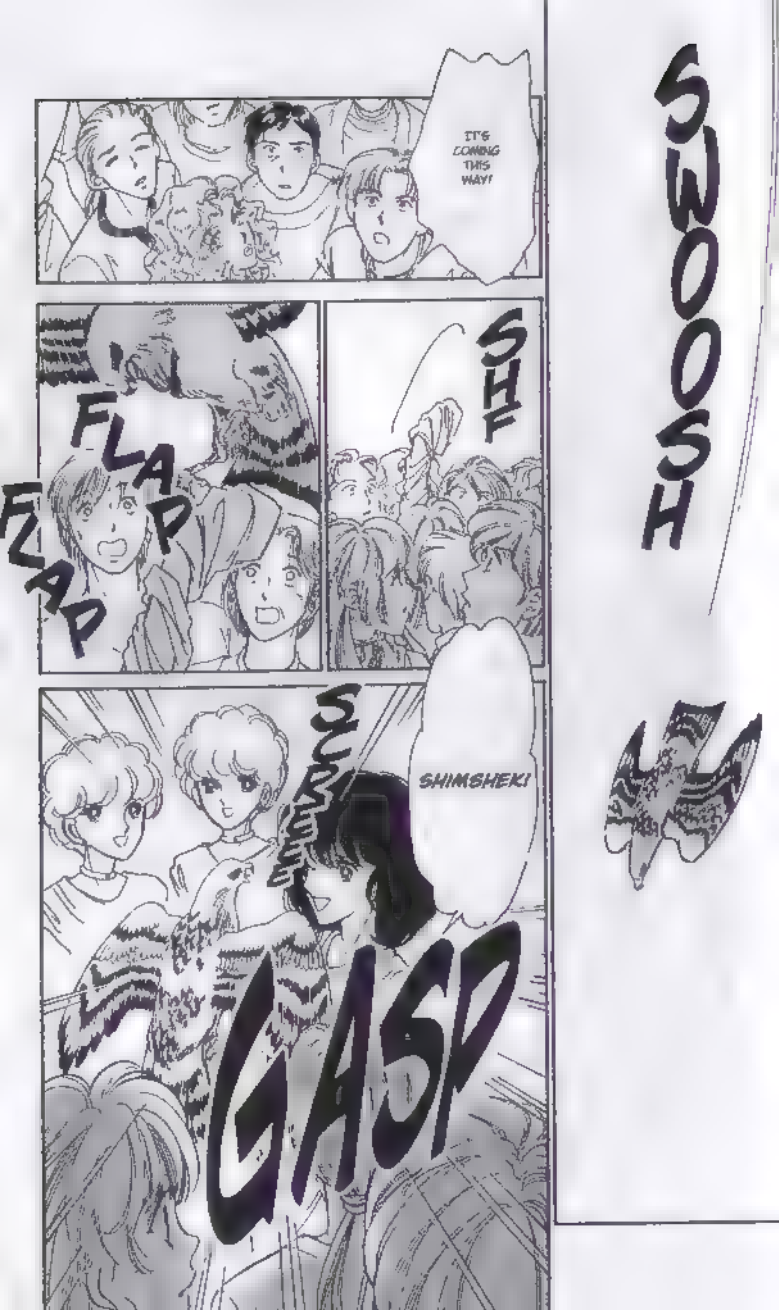
WHINNY
WHAT'S WRONG?
OH! COMMANDER RUSAFA!
WHINNY
ISHTAR'S HORSE ASLAN IS SUDDENLY ACTING UP, SIR.
HAW! HAW!
KUFF
KUFF
THAT'S RANGE...


SHREEE
FLAP FLAP
SHREEE
WHAT'S WRONG HERE?!
UM... ISHTAR'S HAWK SHIMSHEK IS...
...GOING WILD, SIR!
THIS IS—
AH!
SNAP
SHE'S GOTTEN LOOSE!
FWAP
FWAP FWAP

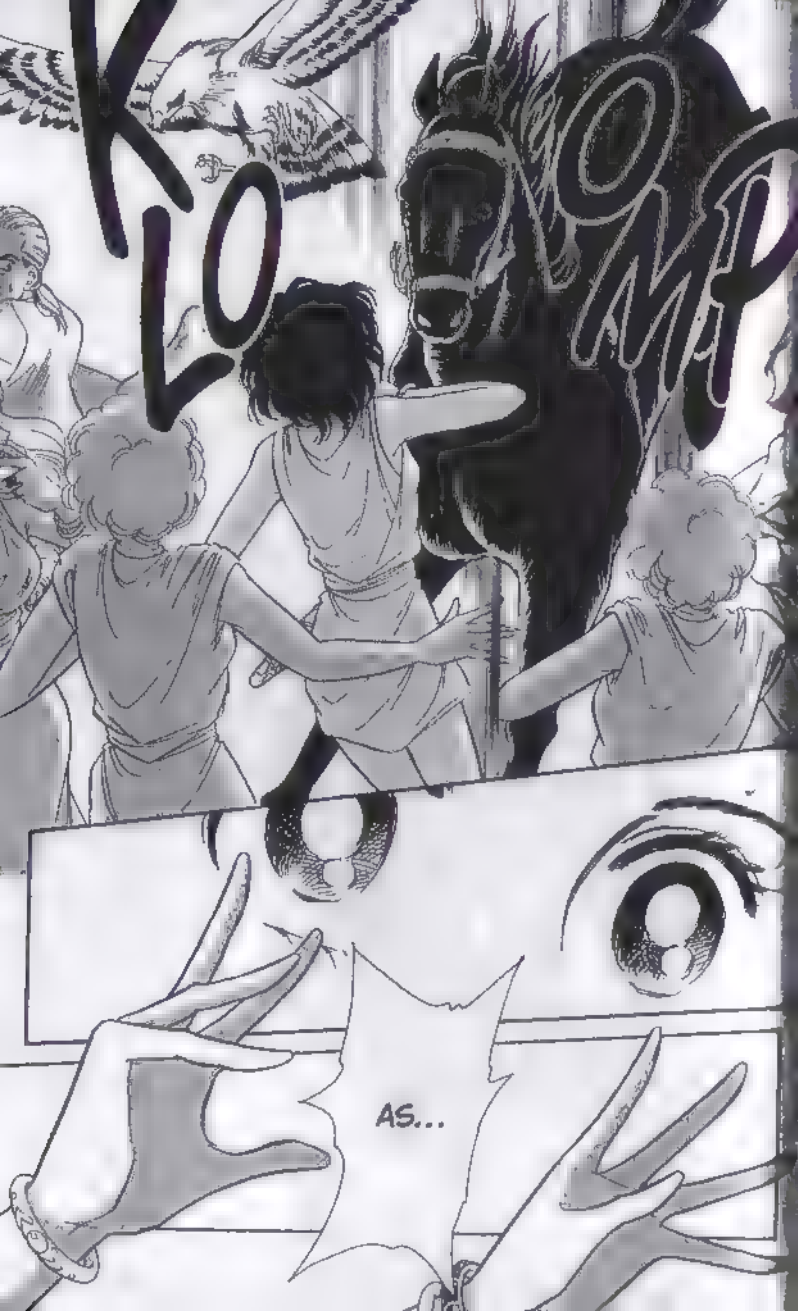
HUSTLE BUSTLE
SHRIEK SHRIEK
EEEE
SHEESH! EVERY-ONE'S SURE STIRRED UP!
LIKE THE BOAT CAPTAIN SAID, THINGS ARE A BIT CRAZY.
SOME PEOPLE ARE FLEEING THE TOWN IN PANIC...
..WHILE OTHERS ARE HOPING TO PROFIT FROM THE SITUATION.
EXCUSE ME!
WHERE ARE THE HITTITE FORCES STATIONED?
I DON'T KNOW AND DON'T CARE! WE'RE EVACUATING!
EXCUSE ME, DO YOU KNOW...
ARE YOU HOPING TO ENTERTAIN THE HITTITE SOLDIERS?
TRUP TRUP
WHY WOULD WE TELL COMPETI-TORS WHERE TO FIND THEM?

...I THINK WE SHOULD FOLLOW THEM.
HAZARDING A GUESS...
SHOVE
BAM
SHRIEK
HUSTLE BUSTLE
BUM BUM
THAT MIGHT BE TRICKY...
PERHAPS WE CAN ASK A GUARD TO LET US ENTER.
THERE THAT HILLTOP CITADEL

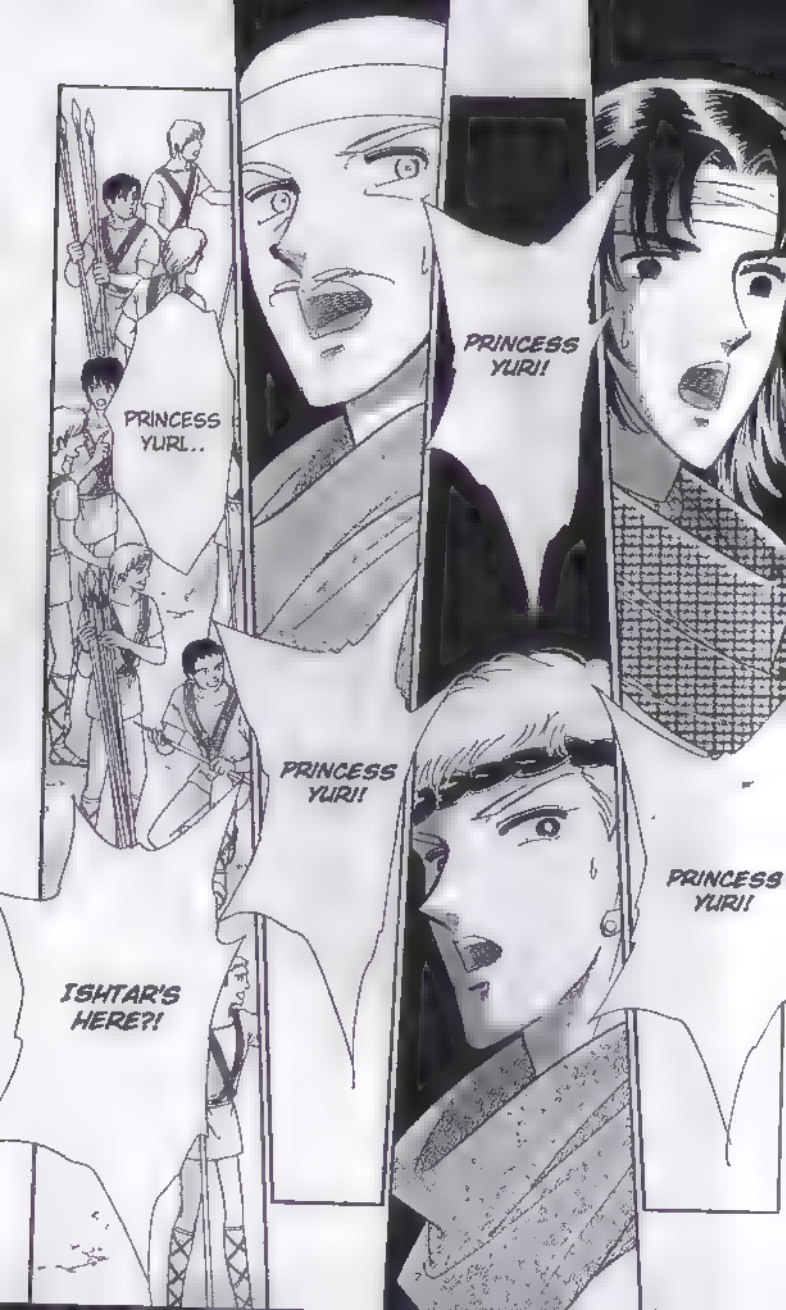

HUSTLE BUSTLE BUZZ BUZZ
IT LOOKS LIKE THEY HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL!
HUSTLE BUSTLE BUZZ BUZZ
ISN'T THAT ISHTAR'S HAWK?


SWOOSH
IT'S COMING THIS WAY!
SHF
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
SHIMSHEK!
SCREECH
GASP

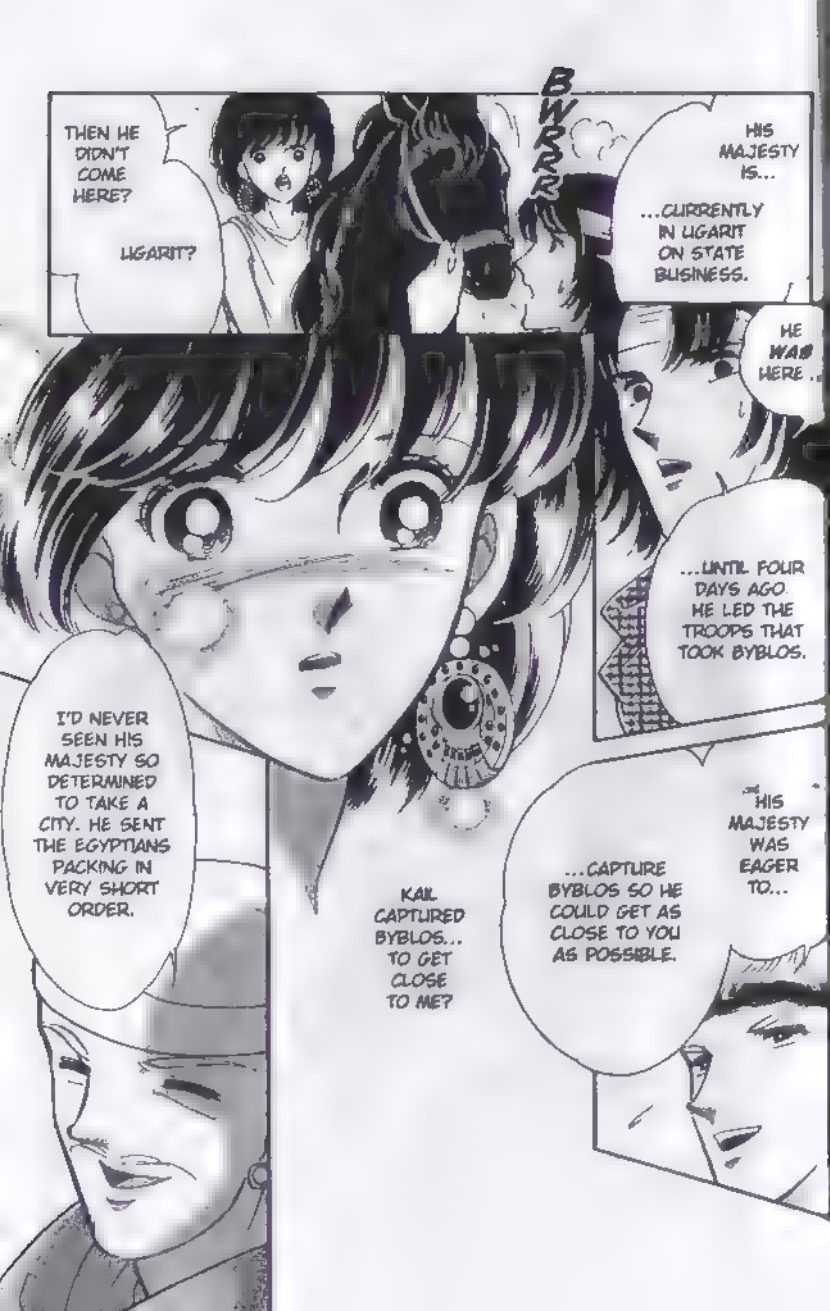
VHAM
YEOW!
KLOP
A RUNAWAY HORSE!
KLOP
NOW WHAT?!

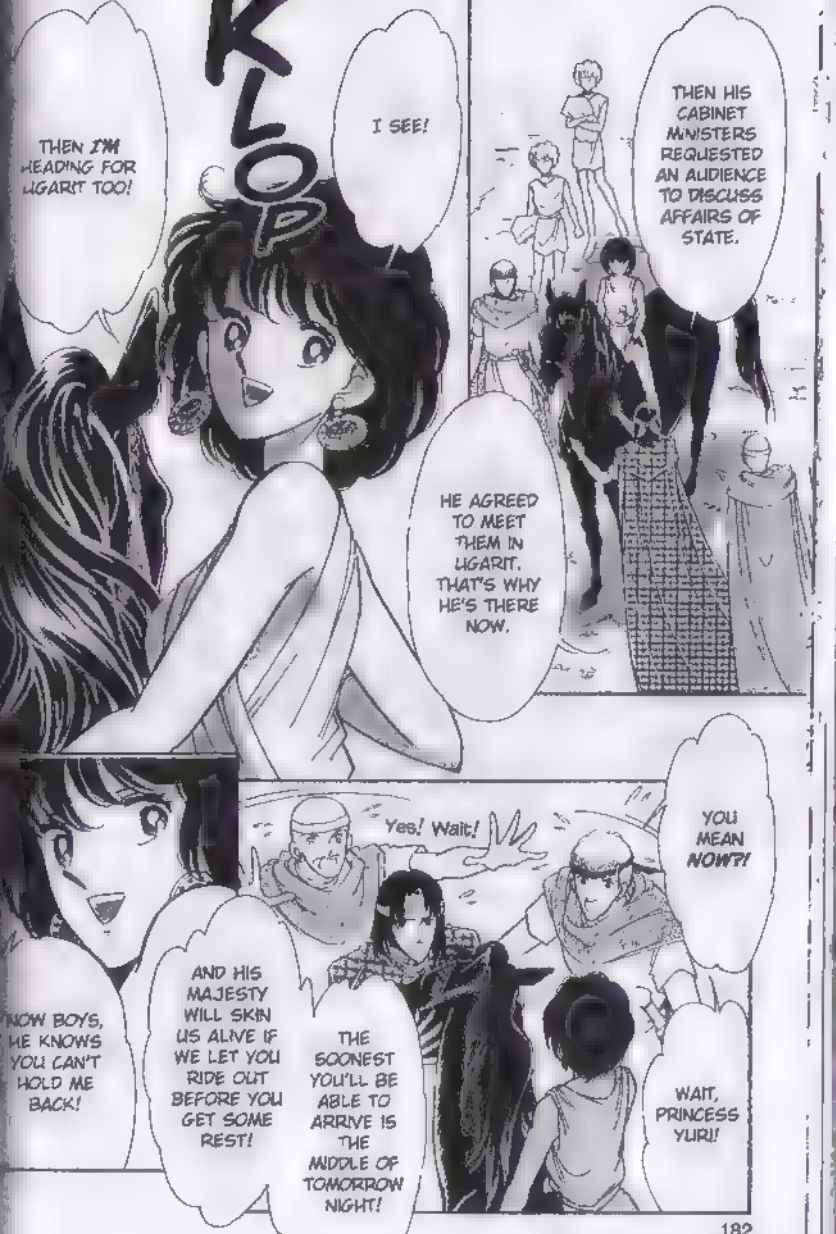

KLOMP
AS...

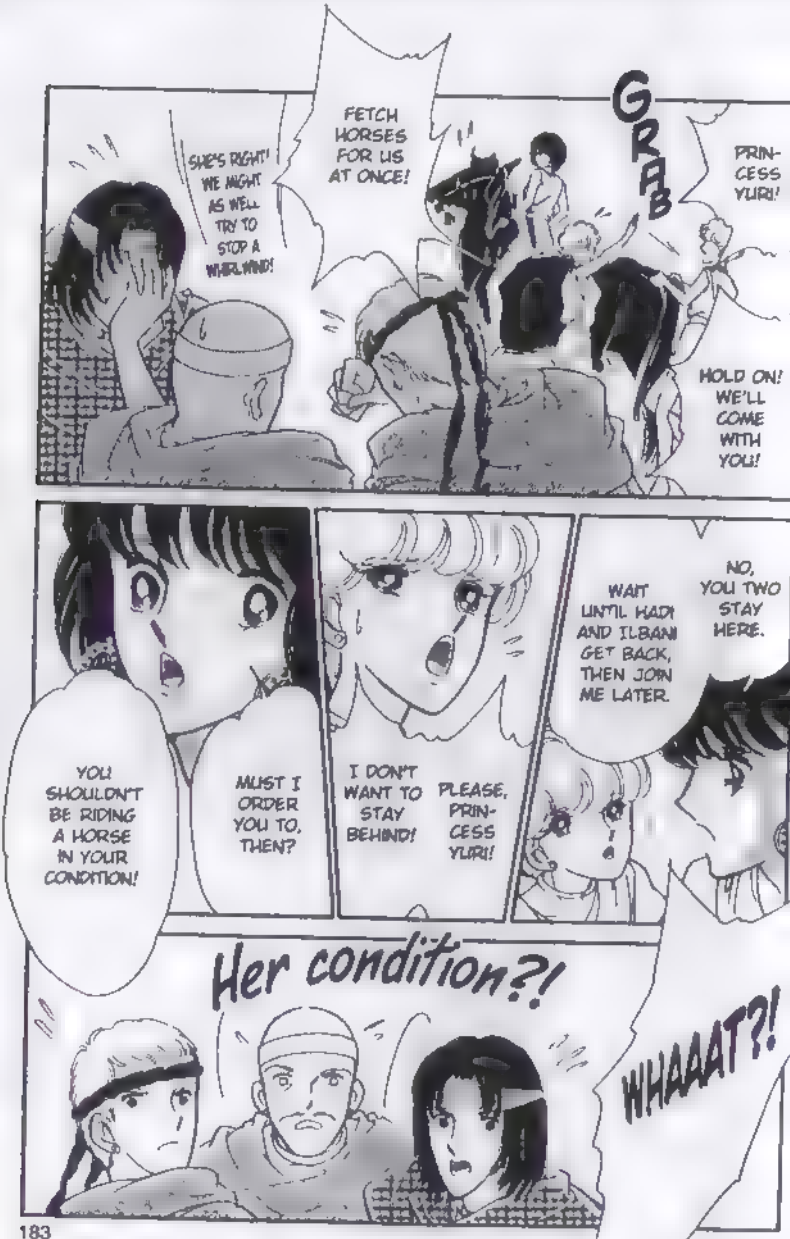
ASLAN!


PRINCESS YURI!
PRINCESS YURI..
PRINCESS YURI!
PRINCESS YURI!
ISHTAR'S HERE?!

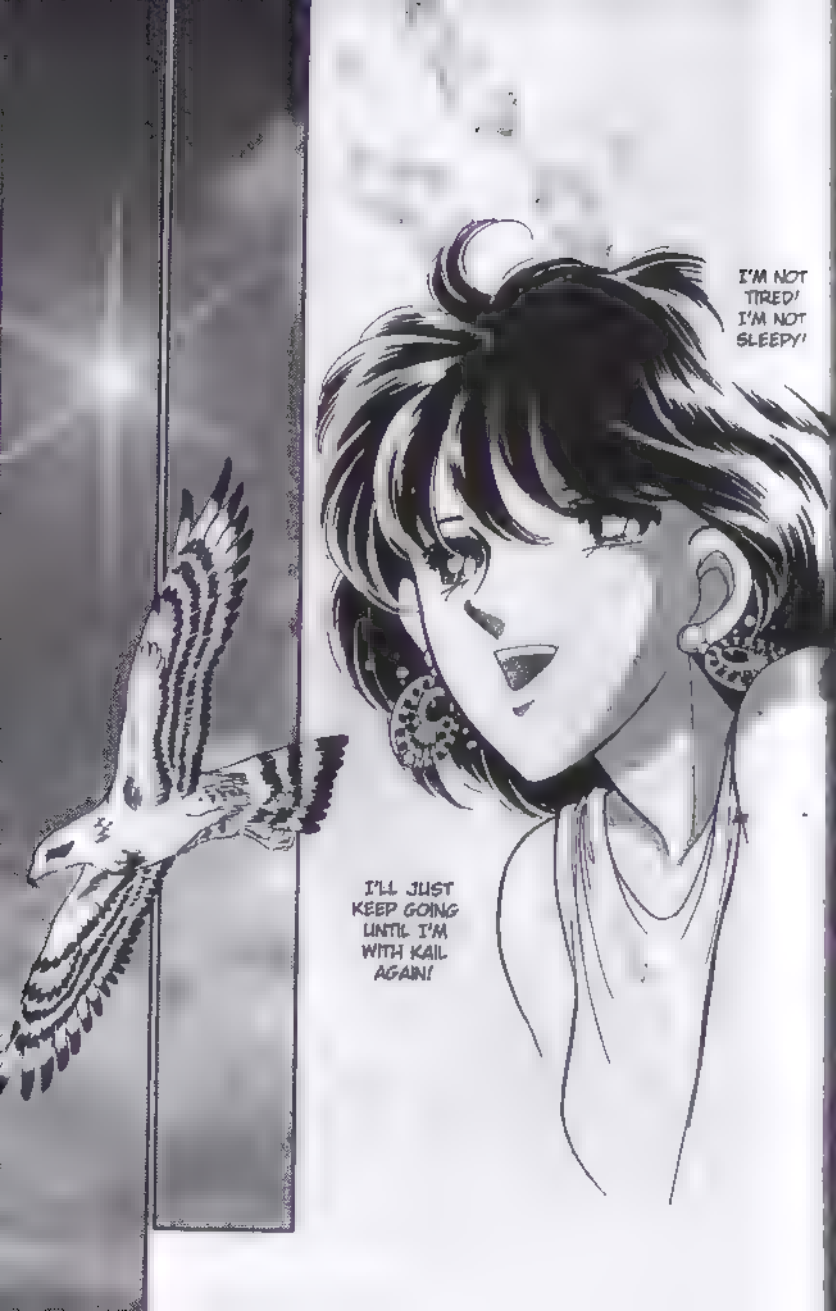
JUMP
WOMP
I'M SORRY IF I WORRIED YOU, I JUST...
IF YOU'D SENT WORD, WE'D HAVE GREETED YOU AT THE PIER!
PRINCESS YURI!
IT REALLY IS YOU!
SO WHERE IS HE? IS HE HERE?
NEVER MIND THAT!
I'VE GOT TONS OF STUFF TO TELL KAIL!


THEN HE DIDN'T COME HERE?
UGARIT?
BWRRR
HIS MAJESTY IS...
...CURRENTLY IN UGARIT ON STATE BUSINESS.
HE WAS HERE..
...UNTIL FOUR DAYS AGO. HE LED THE TROOPS THAT TOOK BYBLOS.
I'D NEVER SEEN HIS MAJESTY SO DETERMINED TO TAKE A CITY. HE SENT THE EGYPTIANS PACKING IN VERY SHORT ORDER.
KAIL CAPTURED BYBLOS... TO GET CLOSE TO ME?
...CAPTURE BYBLOS SO HE COULD GET AS CLOSE TO YOU AS POSSIBLE.
HIS MAJESTY WAS EAGER TO...


KLOP
THEN I'M HEADING FOR UGARIT TOO!
I SEE!
THEN HIS CABINET MINISTERS REQUESTED AN AUDIENCE TO DISCUSS AFFAIRS OF STATE.
HE AGREED TO MEET THEM IN UGARIT. THAT'S WHY HE'S THERE NOW.
NOW BOYS, HE KNOWS YOU CAN'T HOLD ME BACK!
AND HIS MAJESTY WILL SKIN US ALIVE IF WE LET YOU RIDE OUT BEFORE YOU GET SOME REST!
THE SOONEST YOU'LL BE ABLE TO ARRIVE IS THE MIDDLE OF TOMORROW NIGHT!
Yes! Wait!
YOU MEAN NOW?!
WAIT, PRINCESS YURI!

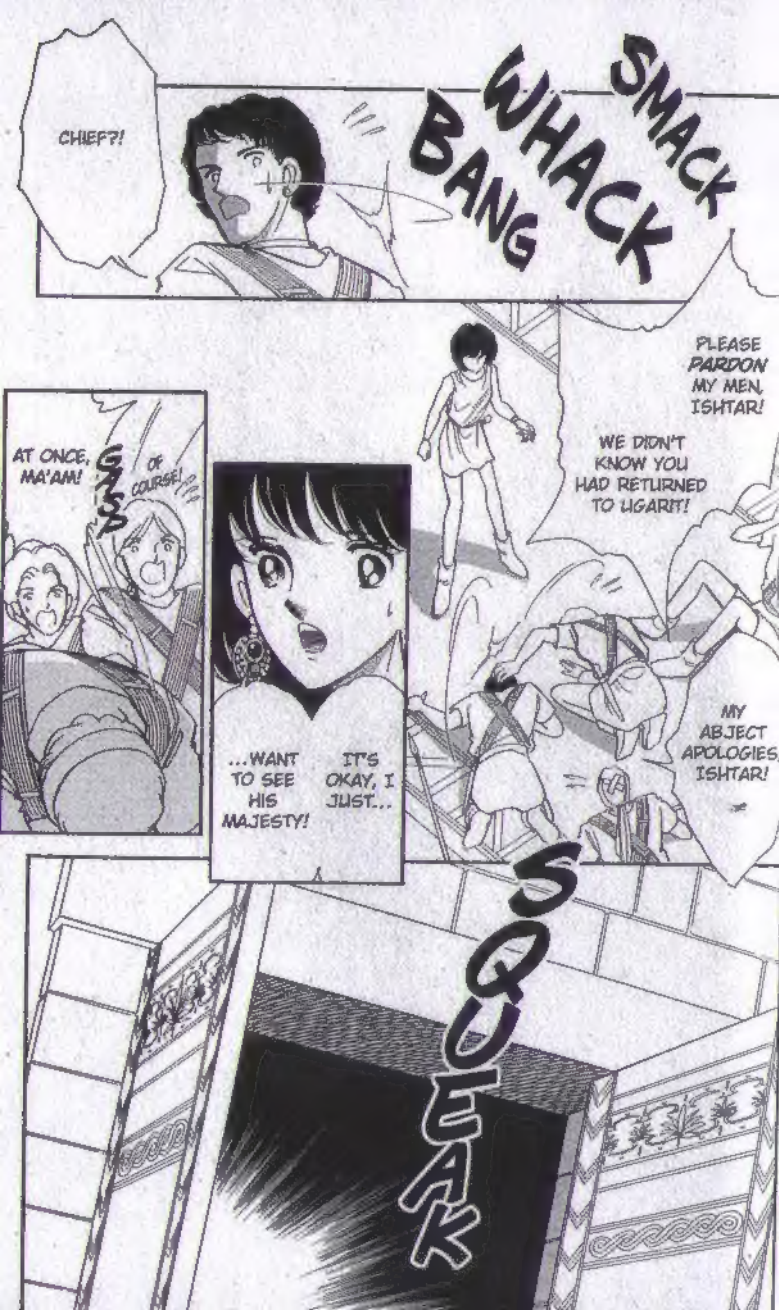

SHE'S RIGHT! WE MIGHT AS WELL TRY TO STOP A WHIRLWIND!
FETCH HORSES FOR US AT ONCE!
GRAB
PRINCESS YURI!
HOLD ON! WE'LL COME WITH YOU!
NO, YOU TWO STAY HERE.
WAIT UNTIL HADI AND ILBANI GET BACK, THEN JOIN ME LATER.
PLEASE, PRINCESS YURI!
I DON'T WANT TO STAY BEHIND!
MUST I ORDER YOU TO, THEN?
YOU SHOULDN'T BE RIDING A HORSE IN YOUR CONDITION!
Her condition?!
WHAAAT?!

Achoo!
No question it's a...
And the father...?
She's pregnant?
OH!
YOU MUST MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR THE JOURNEY!
DON'T JUST RIDE OFF, PRINCESS YURI!
WE WON'T LET YOU RIDE WITHOUT ESCORT!
PRINCESS YURI! WAIT UP!

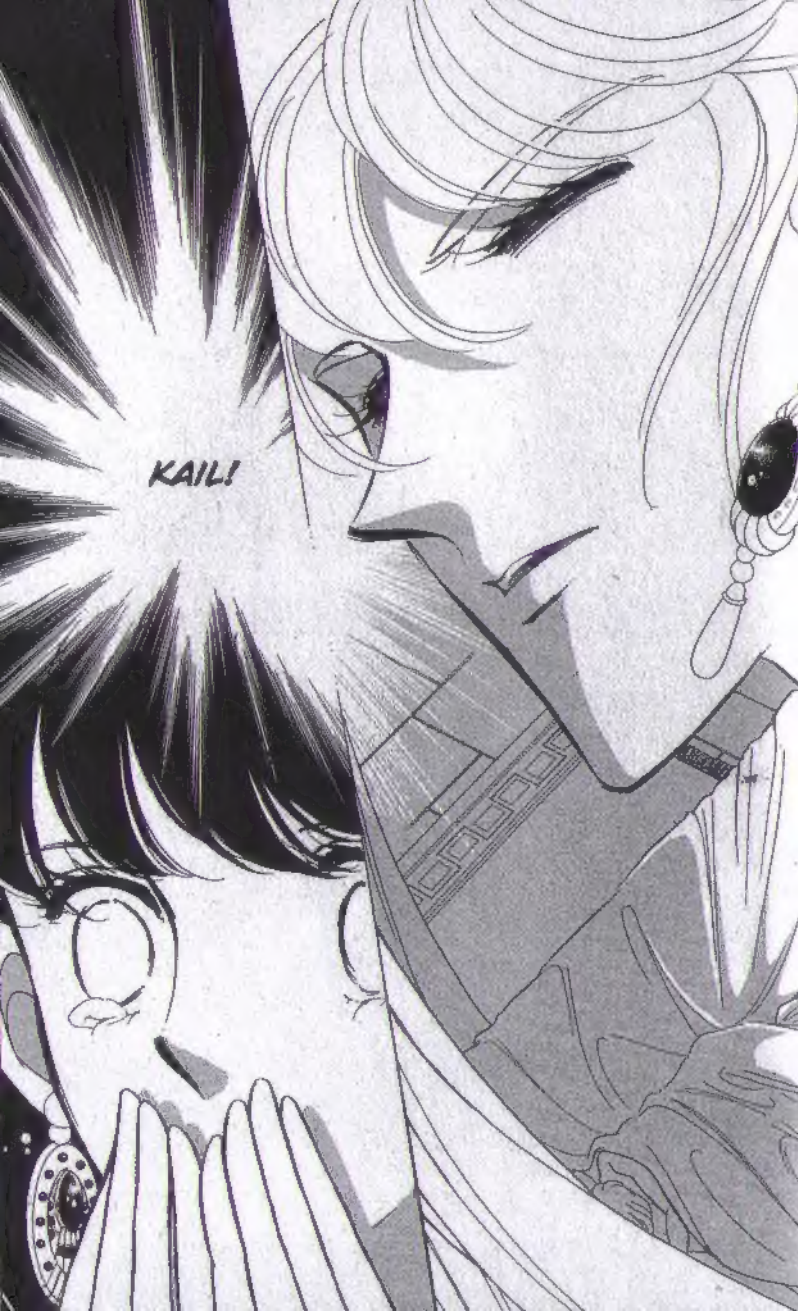

I'M NOT TIRED! I'M NOT SLEEPY!
I'LL JUST KEEP GOING UNTIL I'M WITH KAIL AGAIN!

THE PALACE IN UGARIT
TA-RUMP
TA-RUMP
TA-RUMP
TA-RUMP
TA-RUMP
BWRRR
ISHTAR? I I DIDN'T KNOW!
WATCH YOUR MOUTH! THAT WAS ISHTAR!
KLOP
WHOA, YOU! STOP!
WEARY TRAVELERS IS ALL! THANKS!
BWRRR
AT THIS UNGODLY HOUR?!
WHO WANTS IN.
WHINNY
OPEN THE GATES!
OPEN THE GATES!

MA'AM, YOU CAN'T...
BUT I DON'T...
UM... ASLEEP.
WHERE IS HIS MAJESTY?
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR LITTLE GIRLS LIKE YOU TO WANDER AROUND.
STOP RIGHT THERE.
...SO HE WOULD HARDLY BE INTERESTED IN YOU. GET LOST!
YOU MUST BE KIDDING!
HIS MAJESTY COULD ENJOY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN THE WORLD...
I MUST SEE HIS MAJESTY AT ONCE!
LET ME PASS!


CHIEF?!
SMACK
WHACK
BANG
PLEASE PARDON MY MEN, ISHTAR!
WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD RETURNED TO UGARIT!
MY ABJECT APOLOGIES, ISHTAR!
AT ONCE, MA'AM!
GASP
OF COURSE!
...WANT TO SEE HIS MAJESTY!
IT'S OKAY, I JUST...
SQUEAK

K-CHNK
KAIL?


KAIL!